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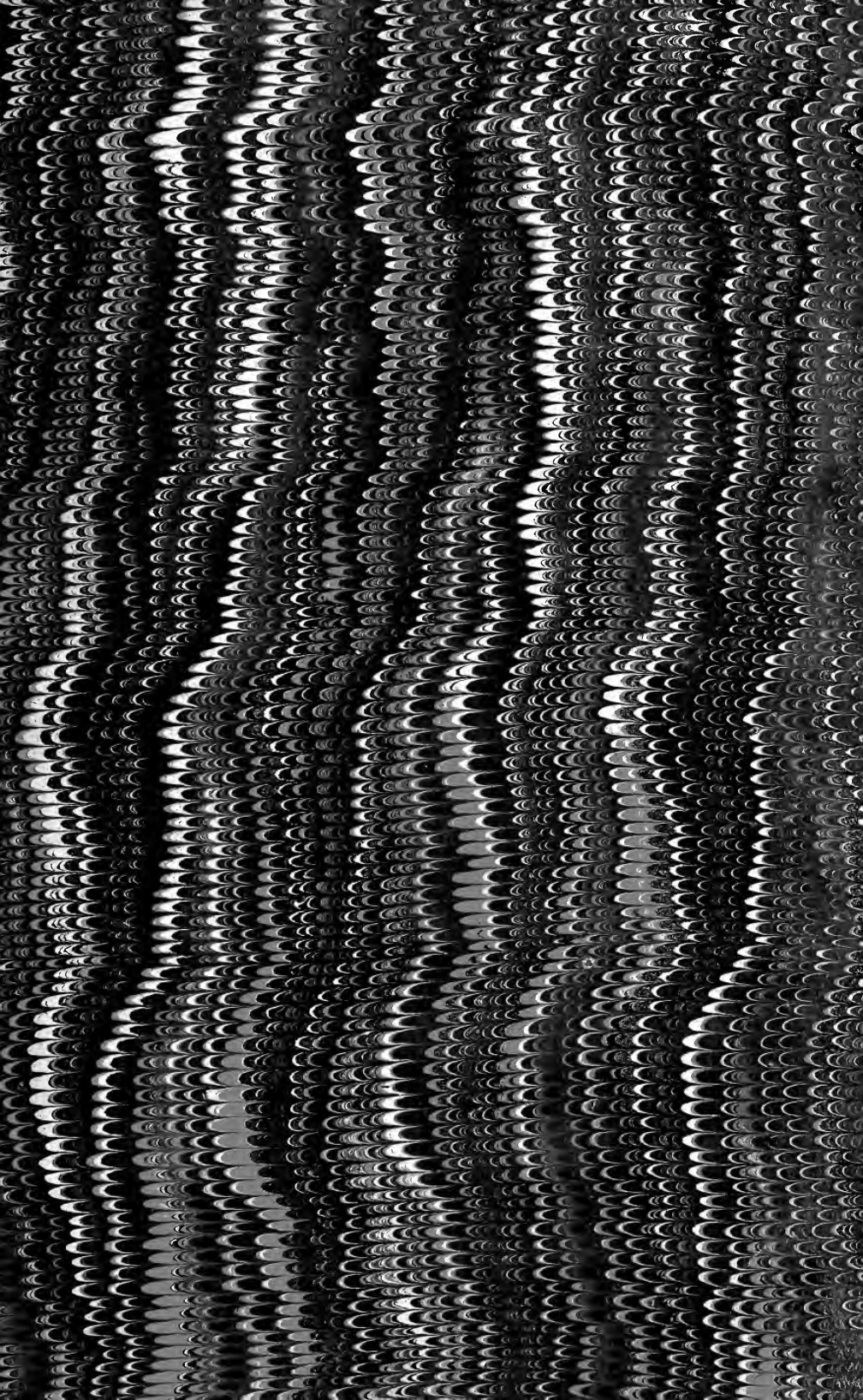
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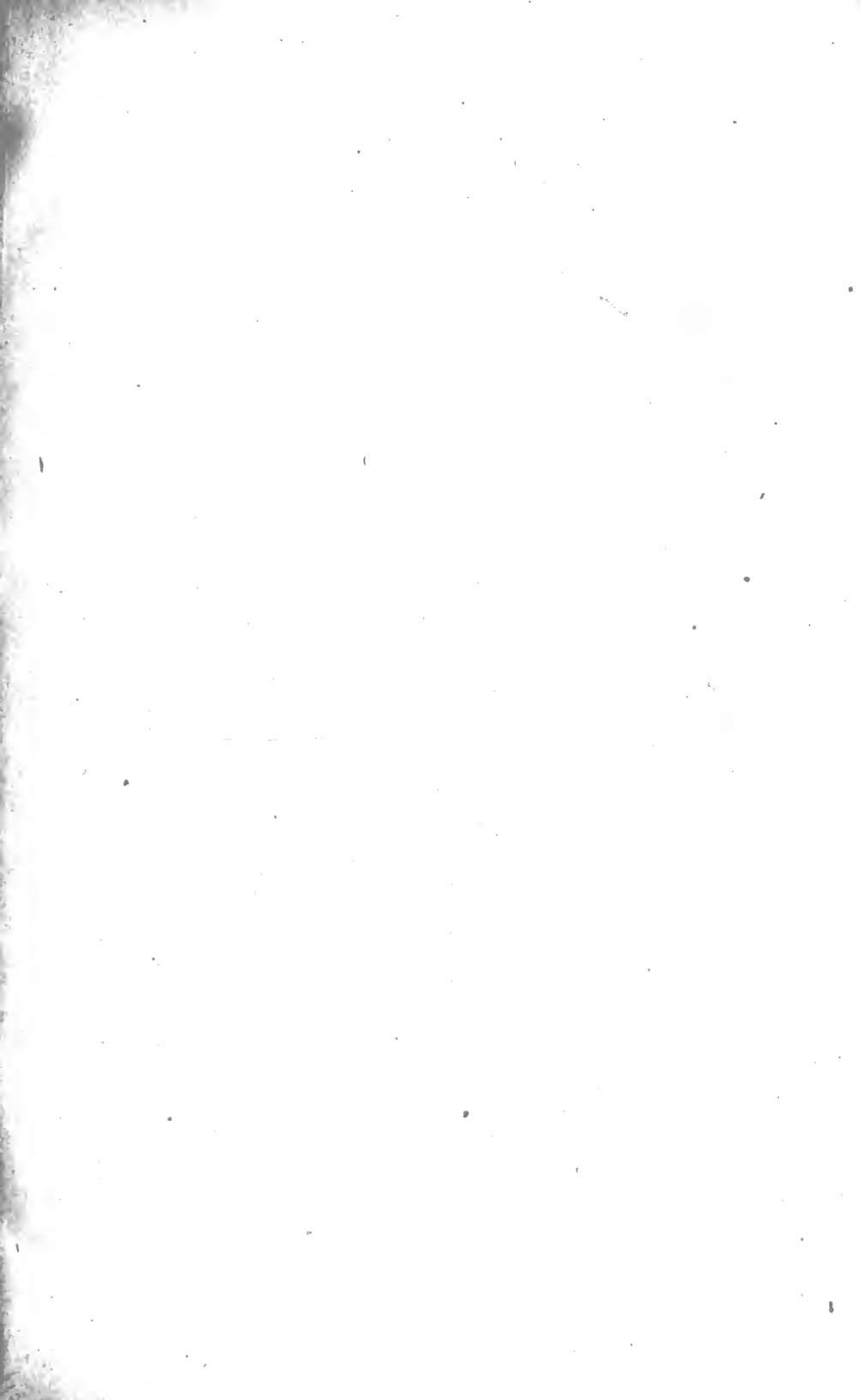
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THE LIFE OF MY FAMILY;

OR, THE

LOG-HOUSE IN THE WILDERNESS.

A TRUE STORY.



BY MRS. RACHEL WATSON.



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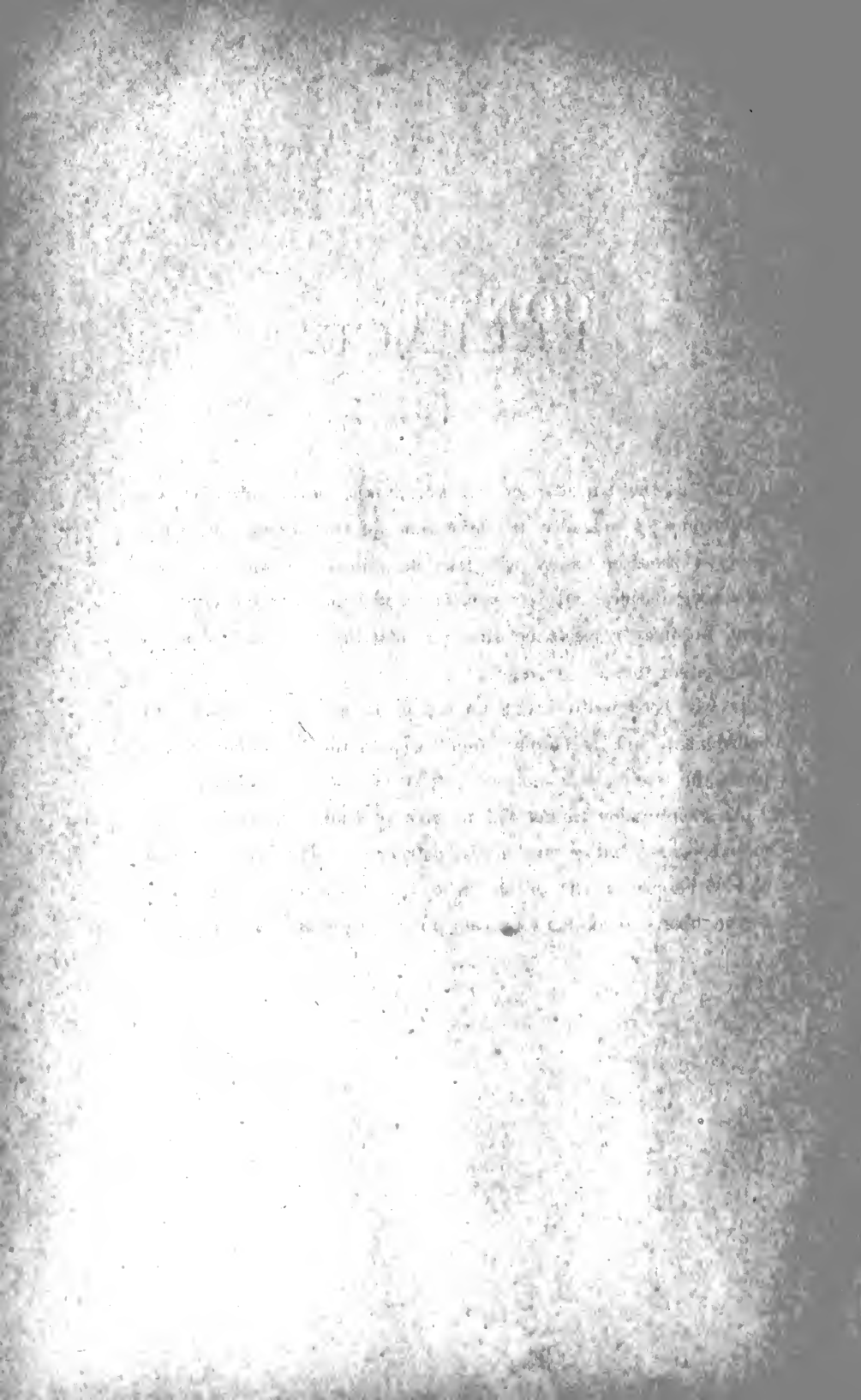
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E.W., Oct. 2, 1922

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PREFACE.

THIS is the narrative of the adventures, trials, hardships and misfortunes of a family, beside which, for thrillingness of detail, many a sensation story will lose its crimson glamor and fade into insignificance. It is a truthful record, and fraught with incident, in many respects, far stranger than the usual fiction of the imaginative romance monger.

It has been written with no sickly attempt at rhetorical embellishment, and is simply intended, with the hope that it may profit the reader, as a mother's gift to two young daughters.

An examination cannot fail to give pleasure, and their worthy motive cannot but secure liberal patronage. The price is small, and within the reach of any who may wish real entertainment for an hour. A mother's prayers go out with her daughters.



THE
LIFE OF MY FAMILY,
OR THE
LOG-HOUSE IN THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS born in the town of Plymouth, in Chenango county, state of New York, in which place my parents had resided for many years. Plymouth is a small village of not very much outside importance, but like every other primitive settlement, is considerable inflated with its own consequence. It is strictly provincial, yet it would be extremely difficult to persuade the good people residing there that Plymouth does not desire to be quite as well known as Paris, London, Constantinople, Rome, Pekin, or New York city.

My father was in very independent circumstances, owned a fine farm, several mills, and held a position of high respectability in society. He bestowed a great deal of care upon the education of his children, and indulged them to the extent of his ability. I was

never sent to a boarding school, but I was kept strictly at the district school, and my mother was careful that I should improve every moment of time when not necessarily engaged in home duties. Education was not then what it is now.

“When I was about twenty years of age, I first met Harry Watson. I was not long in discovering that he loved me, for such knowledge comes to a maiden’s heart long before it is whispered in her ear. He had been married and was widowed, and when he asked me to fill the place in his heart made vacant by the rude hand of death, I found that my heart responded to the call, and after a brief courtship, I married him.

He lived far away, was the owner of a splendid farm of six hundred and forty acres, covering a square mile of land in Clinton county, near Plattsburg, on one of the great lakes.

In less than a week after our marriage, we started for our new home, taking passage on a steamer from Whitehall, bound north.

I was supremely happy, and under such circumstances could not allow myself to think of danger. Nothing occurred to mar our happiness, until, when about half-way to our destination, we were one night, just about midnight, horrified with the cry, “The boat is sinking!”

Such seemed indeed to be the case. In a moment the wildest confusion prevailed. There was a tumultuous rush among the passengers, loud screaming and crying, and a furious running to and fro. My first thought was of Harry. Among others, I ran to the door to get out. To my horror, I found we were all

locked in. In my fright I ran back to the lounge upon which a gentleman was reclining, seemingly in no dread of consequences, and throwing my arms around him, I besought him to save me. I could not see my husband and my heart felt as if it would break. He replied that it was foolish to be alarmed, that he considered the danger very questionable, but that he would exert his strength to save me if it became necessary. He begged me to be calm and said: "I shall not stir from my seat, so long as the stove retains its position; when that is shaken, I shall prepare to swim, and I shall bear you along with me."

At that time Harry was on deck, and suggesting to the captain that there was too much freight on one side of the vessel, was busy in assisting to remove it, which effected, the water soon ceased to come in, and our gallant vessel rode the waves in safety. With this little interruption, our passage was a delightful one. Ah! those hours of the dear honeymoon when life was untried, and everything seemed so fair, they come back to me like the remembrance of a sweet, sweet dream; and I love to live them over and forget the darker days. But sterner duties were ahead of me, beside which the steamboat fright seemed trifling.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE home to which my husband bore me was away off in the wild woods. He had made a little clearing, and there he built a rude log edifice, but charming in its rustic simplicity, it gave beauty to the wilderness. Had not love cheered and solaced me in the absence of comforts, and separated from the dear ones of my youth, perhaps I should hardly have been contented with the home in the forest, sheltered by the oak, the pine, and the poplar, through which the wind swept in weird music, awakening echoes like the low, full chorus of a church organ. It was a sylvan haunt, and I should sometimes not have wondered if the friendly faces of fauns and satyrs had thrust themselves in at my open door.

But what mattered seeming discomforts. I loved Harry, and as Ruth said to Naomi I said to him: "Whither thou goest, I will go; where thou diest will I die; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

As we were near our rustic little cottage, as if to test my courage, he looked out from the hired carriage that bore us from the steamboat landing, and pointing, said: "Behold your home!" I made him no reply, but softly nestled my hand in his.

"Can my wife be happy here?"

"Happy?" I replied. "You shall see how happy your wife intends to make her husband."

"But you have had no time to calculate the hardships and trials of a frontier life."

"Love is very weak," I answered, "that stops to calculate hardships."

"You must remember there are long, dreary winter days before you, when I must of necessity be many times absent. How then will my little wife endure the loneliness of her forest home?"

"In making that home bright and cheerful for her husband's return. The fire shall burn brighter on the hearthstone, the supper shall be more plentiful and tidy, and the wife's welcome shall be more gushing for the cares and toils of a livelihood to which her husband shall be subjected."

He folded me in his arms, and pressed a long, long kiss upon my lips.

"God bless you, my darling! I scarcely feel worthy of the precious treasure of your love and confidence," said Harry with deep emotion.

"I am not afraid to trust you, my husband."

Hand in hand we entered the little log-cottage, with silent vows that our fidelity should not be shaken, come what might, in the ordering of fate or in the dispensations of Providence. It was well; for sadly were we tried.

As the reader already knows, we settled upon a square mile of land. It was unoccupied territory, and as there could be found no one who laid claim to the property, we took up the whole lot. While we lived upon it, it was sold for taxes; but of this procedure we

were not previously notified, and have now in our possession a state-deed. The woods abounded with wild beasts. We could hear the growling of bears, the howling of wolves, the cries of panthers, and the screams of wild-cats. We had no very near neighbors, and often felt the need of social intercourse ; but this we did not permit to mar our contentment. Not very far distant from our settlement were the remnants of an Indian tribe. They were disposed to be friendly, and it gave us great pleasure to dispense to them the hospitalities of our humble home, when upon their tramps, they would call and ask permission to have shelter for the night.

The sight of a human face was refreshing, and we hailed their coming, and much enjoyed the sight of their romantic camps, with their carpeting of blankets and buffalo robes.

They were principally engaged in gathering spruce chewing gum, which is obtained in great quantities from the spruce-trees that abound in that region.

They exhibited evidence of much industry.

They would usually rise by the break of day, fold away their blankets, and be off in the woods. It was a profitable business to them, for they found ready sale for their gum.

They frequently brought with them the women of the tribe, and I made a close friendship with a young girl, who was very pretty, and whose greatest delight was to remain with me, while the men were out in search of rich spruce-trees.

She had a most beautiful name, which meant, "morning sunbeam," and I have often thought in the

home wigwam, that indeed, she must have been the sunbeam of the morning.

Poor Enona! Very soon was the light of her free, wild life beclouded, for the young brave, to whom she gave her heart, fell under the jealous stroke of a rival's tomahawk, and slowly the sunbeam declined, and finally set in the darkness of the grave. There were sad faces in the tribe that day, and almost more than Indian stoicism was required, to prevent the falling of the tear, as they folded her away in the striped blanket, and left her under the trees, to bend her lonely pilgrimage to the spirit land.

I have witnessed many funerals, but none more sorrowful than that of my dear, young Indian friend, when the forest was casting its leaves and the autumn winds stole up from their caverns to wail her requiem.

I must here pause, for tears are blinding my sight, and I feel a choking sensation in my throat.

How dearly I loved my dusky friend! Away off in my isolated locality—where friendships were of necessity—so scarce, the love of this faithful, fond, untutored child of the forest, was precious beyond comparison.

It was a friendship unacquainted with selfishness, and untrammelled by the wiles of interest. But I must proceed. I dare not stop to contemplate the brief, but bright career of poor Enona.

Shortly after this, I experienced the first severe storm in the woods. It was almost after the terrible character of a tropical tornado.

One morning Harry left me before daylight, to take to market a load of salts. As he was about leaving, he said to me, "Rachel, the air is very sultry, and the

clouds appear threatening ; do you not think it would be wise in me to carry along my overcoat and umbrella ?”

“ You know the old adage,” I replied ; “ A wise man always takes with him his cloak and umbrella !” And I laughed as I handed them to him, for at the moment the sunshine burst through the low, dark clouds, and gilding the tree-tops with a blinding glory, seemed to mock our prudence. “ But I am not sure you will need them. They may, at last, be of no use, and only an extra burden for your patient oxen,” I replied.

“ I shall carry them at any rate, for the morning is by no means propitious of a fine day.”

He kissed me, and bade me good-by. A feeling of dreadful foreboding overcame me, as I watched him slowly driving off from our cabin. I returned in doors, too sad to weep, and tried as cheerfully as possible to busy myself with household duties. I could not shake off a presentiment of sorrow.

A short time after sunrise, the wind came moaning up through the forest, like the growling echo of the lion’s roar, then mounting in the awful blast of the hurricane, seemed bent on tearing up the trees by the roots. They swayed to and fro like reeds of the marsh, and soon came a terrible crashing, and one and another haughty lord of a century, that lifted its tall head proudly above its fellows, was wrenched, and crushed its lowlier brethren in its fall. Black clouds rolled up from the horizon to the zenith—thunder charged, and down ran the lightning like a demon imp, at mocking play with Nature’s giant handy-work.

There has always been to me an awful charm in the horrors of a tempest, and I stood like one entranced, and watched the lightning, as down it ran through tall pines, and split them, as with a woodman's wedge. The scene beggars description. My humble cabin, I knew, was quite too small and low in altitude to attract the dart of the fiery visitor, but I momentarily expected that I would be crushed beneath the weight of the tall trees that were snapping around—the very playthings of the storm. Where my husband was, I could not tell. Human habitations were much too scarce to believe he could have found shelter, and I could not allow myself to hope he had reached a clearing.

In this state of anxiety, I remained for five mortal hours. The winds had ceased their growling—the thunder only muttered feebly at low intervals, and the clouds were rapidly dispersing. Harry was nowhere in sight. The road through the woods was completely blockaded by the wreck of the dense forest, and vainly I spoke words of courage to my poor aching heart. I strained my ears to listen. I could not weep—I could only pray; and the simple prayer that my lips framed themselves into, was the one struggling petition of the publican.

After awhile I fancied I heard my name shouted. I listened. Was I mistaken, or had fancy awakened the sound of my husband's voice? or, was echo only playing upon my frenzied imagination? I listened again, and more eagerly. No; oh, joy! I was not mistaken.

"Rachel!" I heard the name distinctly, and I ran in the direction, but could not proceed far, over the

broken timber that lay across my pathway. "Rachel! Rachel!" Yes, it was he; it was the voice of my husband! He was alive!

"Rachel, make haste! Bring me an axe! Come out towards the clearing! The road is blocked up so that I cannot bring in my wagon!"

You may rest assured I was not long in following the direction of the sound. With much difficulty I made my way over the bodies and limbs of trees, to where my husband was.

I had borne up in the presence of the demon of the elements, but when I saw Harry, my feelings overcame me, and throwing myself in his arms, I wept upon his breast like a tired infant. He chided me sweetly, kissed off my tears, and laughing in my face, said: "Come, darling, come! This weakness does not befit the brave little wife of a pioneer. You are just a little childish!"

A hundred other fond rebukes he heaped upon me—those precious scoldings that so endear a husband to a wife, and I laughed through my tears.

He looked a very Robinson Crusoe. Such a time as we had clearing the way for the wagon to pass! He cut away the branches, and I dragged them aside. It was quite sundown when we reached the cabin. We were both tired, and how hungry you can well imagine, but our evening meal was sweetly seasoned with thankfulness, and before we retired, glad orisons were borne up to the Throne of the Eternal on the breath of prayer.

Our faith was increased, our courage was strengthened; and how much, of all the world, we were to each

other, could only be known by the good God, who had, in his delivering providence, re-cemented our hearts.

The next day brought fresh work to be accomplished. The bodies and limbs of trees, that had fallen around our cottage, had to be cut away and removed ; the fencing around our little garden to be rebuilt ; vines to be lifted and retrained, and a whole year passed before the devastations of the storm had so disappeared, as to make the wilderness blossom with beauty. In the lighter portions of his labors, I cheerfully assisted Harry. Help was exceedingly scarce, and by no means reliable. It was almost impossible to hire, and in the course of time, I became quite as much of an adept in gardening and open-air employment, as in the domestic duties of my simple household.

There was much romance in our way of life ; and the romance which is dignified by actual experience, is by far the most thrilling of all romances. But such would hardly please the fashionable.

CHAPTER III.

FLOWERS SPRING UP!—DEATH ENTERS.

NEW duties and new obligations continued to present themselves. This must be the case in every condition of life. Neither riches nor poverty is exempt from their demands. It matters not how simple may be our surroundings, nor how much we may be bolstered up by wealth and ease, we cannot expect to avoid cares.

Mine came in a very precious form. At the end of the first year of my married life, I became a mother. A new fount of joy had sprung up in my bosom; a fresh light in my cottage, and in the overflowings of the first moments of maternity I believed myself the happiest woman in existence.

My husband had always been tender and considerate; then his tenderness so far increased that I soon found myself almost the object of his idolatry.

My first-born was a daughter. As she lay in my arms and drank in her little life from my bosom, I felt that even the angels might envy me. Harry would laugh at my weakness, but then his jests were fastened with kisses, that induced me often to provoke them. Ah! wedded life has many blessings.

We were somewhat troubled about a name for our darling, for we had a romantic idea that she must have a name as rare as she was precious to our hearts. Few books were seen in our household. Among them,

Harry loved best to read the beautiful story of "Alonzo and Melissa." After much consultation, and many names had been proposed and rejected, we at last determined that our little daughter should be called "Melissa." She was not long our only one.

The olive-branches speedily multiplied around our table. We lived in the wilderness eight years ; at the end of which time, I had been the mother of five children. Melissa was succeeded by Edna and Maude and two little sons then came, that would have gladdened the soul of any mother. But they were only loaned treasures, and full soon were demanded by their owner.

Ah ! my heart bleeds as I approach this part of my story !

Will the reader deem me insane if I relate a presentiment of evil ?

Spiritual manifestations are not according to the opinions of orthodoxy, and yet, orthodoxy fails to attempt an elucidation of many well-authenticated experiences, which are merely placed on the score of excited imaginations. Perhaps this solution is correct ; at any rate mysteries are rarely investigated, or if investigated are made to subserve the purposes of scoffers at religion.

One pleasant afternoon, I sat rocking my little boys to sleep ; one in the cradle beside me, and the other upon my knee. While thus occupied, and humming to them a gentle lullaby, I distinctly heard the voices of children, talking and playing under my window. I was surprised and taking my babe, my dear little Zacharias in my arms, I walked to the window and listened.

"Come, come!" said a childish voice. "Come! we are waiting for you. We will show you the most beautiful flowers and birds, and the finest fruits you ever saw."

I stood and looked out, but could see no one. Could it only have been fancy? I then stepped out, and walked around the house. I saw no one, but felt a gush of air sweep by me, and heard the whir of something like the wings of a large bird. I stood some moments looking around. All was quiet and I walked into the house. Again, I heard the voices under the window, and the voices pleading, "Come! oh, come!" in a louder tone somewhat. I grew nervous, and feared to look, but mustering courage went to the window the second time. I could see nothing, as before. Everything was as quiet and peaceful as one could wish. I resumed my seat, thinking it all imagination, and determined to dismiss it from my thoughts.

In a few days one of my little boys was taken ill with cholera-morbus. We struggled in vain to arrest the disease. It is as rapid as it is frightful. For ever sounding in my ears seemed the voice, "Come, come! we are waiting for you!" and he went—went whither I may only follow, when the voice bids *me* come. In a few days he died. I thought my heart would break. I sent up impious cries for my lost child, and was only recalled to my duty to my husband and remaining children by the illness of my then only son. He was attacked by the same disease of which his little brother had died: Again the voice sounded under the window. I laid my hands over my ears, but it sank rather in my heart. "Come, come! we are waiting for you!"

I felt as if the hand of Destiny was upon me. —My child went! In agony I sent up one long, loud wail, when my dear little girls clustered around my knees, and said : “Ma, we are left !” and I bowed my head, and God spoke to my heart. “Thy will, O Lord, be done !” I cried, and a voice by my side whispered : “Amen !”

It was my husband’s. The floodgates of my sorrow were unloosed. Tears, blessed healing tears, came to my relief. I followed my idolized children to their lowly graves, and I left them for the wild violet and the daisy to make bright their resting-places, and for the spring breezes and the spring birds to sing their lullaby.

Earth seemed darker then—the shadows deeper—the winds wailed more mournfully—the flowers were less gay, and my steps were slower, but it was God’s will, and when regrets arise, I remember Harry’s courageous whisper, and my stricken soul echoes : “Amen ! Amen !”

I think those voices were the effect of the imagination, but the Bible teaches us that Samuel, indeed, heard the Lord call him.

But the reader will say, that was for a special purpose. And I answer it is always for a special purpose that the Lord speaks to us through death ; that is the interpretation I would put upon it, and it would be the orthodox interpretation.

In reference to the calling of my dear little boys, I am not superstitious when I say, I do believe the voices were from the spirit world.

How I loved my children ! How I missed them ! How deeply I mourned for them ! God alone knows !

God alone witnessed the heart agony ! They were beautiful—both of them—as the first dawn of Spring, and as good as they were beautiful. Darling babes, they will call, when it is time for their mother to go.

Natural emotions must have play ; nature's sorrows must find vent. It is God's plan when the waters rise in the cistern to overflowing ; and if in our weakness we lift our souls to grasp after resignation and cry : "Thy will, not ours, O Lord!"—as surely as the publican was heard in his simple aspiration for mercy, so sure will our strength be made perfect in our weakness, and He will not disregard the sacrifice that smokes upon the heart's altar.

I was comforted in my little girls, and I now thank my Heavenly Father, that my boys were taken from the evil to come. Since their death, ours has been a devious pathway. Often in darkness we looked only to the end of the journey for the light of perfect day.

CHAPTER IV.

SUGAR-MAKING—DANGERS—CHASED BY A BEAR.

WHILE we tended our garden and made a clearing upon which we raised a small crop of corn and beans and potatoes, our principal resource for revenue was in the manufacture of maple-sugar.

The sugar-maple is a most beautiful tree. The trunk grows to a considerable height, is moderately slender, and the bark is finely grained and much smoother than the oak or the chestnut. The foliage is very similar to that of the silver-maple, which is seen as an ornamental tree on the streets of New York and in Central Park—of a beautiful, tender green—swaying and trembling in the breeze like that of the aspen. You know what the maple-bloom is? red as scarlet, and brightening the woods and streams in the spring like clumps of fiery sparks.

When the sap is fully mounted in the maple, the tree is tapped and buckets are placed in readiness to receive the rich stream. It always reminded me of drawing blood from the heart, and often I would shudder as the sharp tapping knife was run in to extract the life juice. Ah! if all wounds could be as easily healed as those inflicted upon the sugar-maple, there would be fewer mourning decked figures—fewer shrouded hearthstones. But I am moralizing. There are tropes all along my route, at which I shall glance in passing. After ex-

tracting the sap, the sugar is obtained by boiling it down until it shows symptoms of crystallizing. This is ascertained by trying it with a splinter. If at the end there hangs a bubble it is done, if not it must be boiled until it comes to that point. So just here in my narrative, I leave a lesson in domestic economy.

Notwithstanding my story is full of romance, I hardly think many would like the wild-woods life, with so many dangers and trying inconveniences to contend against.

But there are troubles and vexations in every condition and sphere of existence. Strong characters and great are not made on beds of down, and fattened on sweets and dainties.

They who leave "footprints on the sands of time," are they who come up through great tribulation.

"Very true," some may say, "but there are nerves in the way to torture."

"Nerves! It occurs to me that our grandparents had not so much careful consideration for nerves. Nerve doctors are of late education."

Nerves are fashionable troubles, but troubles indeed; not the fancied tormentors of hysteria or lunacy. But to go on with my narrative, we often boiled our sugar all day, and sometimes worked by moonlight and fire-light. Then the woods—lighted up by the ruddy blaze that threw its reflection far after the deep shadows—would present the most picturesque aspect conceivable. The night-birds would fly and whirl around the fire, utter a shrill cry of curiosity, and then away to the depths of the forest—I dare say to represent the intrusion to their fellows. I have often imagined so. Birds and

beasts have a language of their own, and I fear their complaints are heavy against their superior man.

After the sugar had been moulded, Harry would take it to market. The nearest settlement was C——Y. This was ten miles off. His only mode of transportation was a wagon drawn by oxen. You know the excessive slowness of their gait. It was necessary for him to leave home by daybreak in the morning, and then he could not be expected to return before the same hour the next morning. His absences to me were a great trial.

How often have I been left alone all night in the wilderness among the wild beasts. Sometimes he would leave at nightfall—kissing me and calling me his “brave little wife,” and saying: “My Rachel is not a coward! No, no;” and this when my heart would be quaking and my voice trembling so that I could not venture to speak.

How often have I stood and watched his departure—gazing after him in the twilight, until all trace of him was invisible, and until I would lose the faintest sound of his voice, as he cheered or forced on the sluggish beasts that drew his wagon.

Then, with a fearful sigh, I would turn into our cabin, close and fasten our door with a ponderous iron bar; for even there, we were not safe from rude incursions. With the darkness came the howling and barking of wolves, the growling of bears, and the fierce screams of wild-cats. Nearer and nearer they would come, until sometimes they would reach the house. There was no sleep for me when my husband was away. The howling and barking of the wolves at the

door, the snuffing and snorting of the bears around the windows, would continue until daylight, then, as if instinct with fear, they would return to their dens, and I could snatch an hour's repose after my fearful vigil. All this time my children could sleep. Oh! many and many a night have I passed in this way, not knowing but that morning would find me and my three little children the prey of the ravenous beasts.

One morning Harry went farther into the woods than usual for the purpose of chopping down some very large trees that he wished to make use of. He had not been long at his work, when an immense black bear came running directly towards him. He saw it coming, and, overwhelmed with fright, he imprudently dropped his axe and ran for his life, the bear closely pursuing him. He had arrived within a few rods of his house. The bear was almost upon his heels. What should he do? One more step and the infuriated and hungry beast would be upon him.

It was a tragical situation and left him no time to calculate what might be done in the emergency. The instinct of superiority in moral force came to his aid. As quick as thought he turned upon his enemy, held up both of his hands in a menacing attitude—hooting as loudly as he could—all the while keeping his eyes fixed steadily on those of the bear.

For a moment Bruin stood at bay and seemed calmly to consider the situation. Harry's glance never wavered. He has piercing eyes, and I fancy they must have glittered terribly. At any rate the bear, seeming satisfied that he was weaker than his opponent, with a sullen growl turned and retreated to the woods.

Need I say my husband was thankful for his escape. He was as pale as a corpse when he reached the cottage, and sank into a chair in almost a fainting condition.

It was a splendid triumph of man over the brute—of reason over instinct. Or rather it was a happy thought of successful strategy. He had no time to enter into a course of reasoning.

He never had another such an encounter. None in which danger seemed so imminent from our ferocious neighbors, but we were kept in almost constant dread.

My story carries me back to what I have read of the hardships and dangers to which the first settlers of this country were exposed and suffered, except that we had nothing to fear from the danger of starvation. Of our store of simples we had plenty, and cheerfully shared with the poor wayfarer whom chance sometimes threw upon our bounty. Then we realized to the fullest extent the greater blessing in *giving* than *receiving*.

My children's memory served them faithfully in reference to many of these incidents, and then those young girls formed the design of getting mother to write out their history. It was an ambitious thought, but in time I gratified them.

CHAPTER V.

OUR SCHOOL-MA'AM.

WE now began to feel the need of social and educational advantages for our children. Up to this time I had taught them at home, and their sprightliness and desire for instruction induced me to feel that we could not do them justice in the simple and circumscribed sphere of our existence.

When Melissa was seven years old, and Edna six, we induced some Frenchmen to put up log-houses, bring their families and settle on our farm. We laid out a small village, and John La Rue, who afterwards proved one of our very best neighbors and friends, built his house, and lived with his family just across the street from us. Two other Frenchmen with their families lived farther down—about a mile off.

Now we set to work to establish a school. We built a rustic log-schoolhouse, and engaged a lady, who came with necessary recommendations, to take charge of our little institution. She was a very good woman at heart, but inclined to be suspicious and irritable, and constant trifling spats were originating between her and the children, which served to keep up a continual annoyance. I must relate one. It was a silly affair, when we think of it now, but gave serious trouble at the time.

One day after I had put up the children's dinner and

sent them to school, I was frightened and surprised to see them returning—running as fast as they could—with nothing around them or upon their heads. I was very careful of their health, and not a little shocked at their appearance.

“What on earth is the matter?” I cried. “What has brought you home at this hour of the day—without either bonnet or shawl—and most breathless?”

“The teacher was going to whip us,” said Melissa, “and we wouldn’t stay to be punished by her.”

“Had you done anything to merit punishment? I will not allow you to be rude or impertinent, and if such has been the case, I shall have to punish you myself.”

“Stop, mamma! I will tell you the whole story,” said Melissa.

“Well what is it? You must tell me the entire truth. If I find you concealing or exaggerating any part of it, I shall not spare you.”

“We were telling some of the scholars,” said Melissa, “how cross Mrs. — was—you know she *is* cross, mamma, and that she whipped the scholars for just nothing;—and you know it is so, mother. Well, when she went home, some one told her that we had been talking about her, and I guess they told her a great deal more than we had said.

“This morning she called me up, and asked me what I had been telling about her. I would not answer. She said: ‘You shall tell me.’

“I would not open my lips.

“Then she called Edna up. She thought Edna was so much smaller and younger, that she would make her say just what she pleased. But Edna would not

say a word, any more than if she didn't have any tongue.

"All the time she had her great, long whip, lying on the floor by her side. She reached down to pick it up, and said, 'I will see whether you have tongues in your heads and cannot be made to speak. I will see whether you will answer me.' Ah! but I tell you we were off like lightning! We didn't intend to get a whipping because we had told the truth—though she says every day: 'Never tell tales out of school.'

"Away we ran, and she after us. She chased us quite a piece down the road—calling out to us to 'stop!' at every jump.

"But we were not to be caught very easily. She ran until we got in full sight of home, and then gave up and went back to the school-room."

"Now what must I do with you?" I said.

"Mamma, you will not whip us, because we did not choose to speak?" said Edna.

"I certainly do not intend that you shall be disrespectful to your teacher."

"But, mamma, she does whip terribly sometimes."

"Then I guess you are sometimes terribly naughty."

I took them both by the hand and gave them a very serious admonition.

They were so averse to returning to school that day, that I could not find it in my heart to force them. The next day, they did not wish to return to school for fear of punishment, and I permitted them again to remain at home; in the meantime I determined to see the school-ma'am and have the difficulty adjusted. After Mrs. ——'s fit of anger had worn off, she sent up one of

the scholars with a note, asking me to return my little girls—apologizing for her harshness, and promising that they should receive no harm. I made her a visit. All disagreements were settled, and my children returned to school. After that time they got on nicely, and continued as long as we were undisturbed in the possession of our property, under her tuition. There is nothing more delightful than to watch the development of the young mind. It is like the budding and growing and blossoming of a beautiful flower. Ah! how careful should every mother be, that no noxious seed grow around to shadow and warp its glorious promise. A parent's responsibility is, indeed, heavy. Edna and Melissa were sitting beside me as I was writing this simple episode, and their eyes sparkled, and a merry gush of laughter burst forth from their lips at the recollection of this memorable difficulty with their school-ma'am.

"Mamma, don't you think school urchins have a hard time, at best?" said Edna.

"The troubles of children, I think, are quite as hard for them to bear as the troubles of full-grown life. They seem trifling to the older, because they are viewed in comparison. Nothing is to me more touching than a cloud of sadness over the brow of childhood. Ah! it is more merciful that troubles should be reserved until later life. It does seem hard that in the fresh spring-time the cruel frost should nip and dwarf tender fruit. I have more than once seen the snow lay heavily over apple blossoms—the delicate pink shining through in strange, unnatural beauty. It always

reminds me of the shrouding of the young heart in the blighting, frosty livery of care and sorrow."

The countenances of the young girls had assumed a more serious expression, and affectionately they nestled around me—each holding a hand and whispering something that made a happy smile steal over my lips, as I bent to kiss first one and then the other fair young brow uplifted to me.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ENEMY AT THE DOOR.

It was about this time, that my most serious trials had their commencement.

Those I have recounted seem comparatively insignificant, and only intended by the All-Wise as a preparation for the severer in reserve. It is thus that a kind Providence dispenses to us.

It was now more than eight years that we had lived on our land in unmolested possession. Then arose a man by the name of Brown, who laid claim to our home, and sued my husband for the property. Very soon the case came up in the county court. The court told my husband to go home and bring in his witnesses, to prove the rightfulness of his claim. He went, and before he could have time to secure his witnesses and return, the case was called up for trial. Brown's lawyer produced a tax-sale, effected before my husband took up the land, and as there was no plea entered in his defence, despite the state-deed held by him, he was cast in the suit.

There was another disgraceful secret connected with our failure. Our lawyer was bribed. He received fifty dollars from the other side, and did not show our deed, or any papers substantiating our claim. Justice, they tell me, is blind. Perhaps she is; but it does

seem to me, she should oftener be guided by the sense of *feeling*.

Within a week after the adjournment of the court, the sheriff came to dispossess us of our dearly loved home. I say, dearly loved—yes ; for,

“Be it ever so homely,
There is no place like home!”

and this rude little cot in the wilderness had become so endeared through joys as well as hardships, that every foot of its territory was to me sacred soil.

When the sheriff made his appearance, I was lying on my bed with a severe nervous headache. There was a knock at my door, and as I often did, before answering such a summons, I got up, and looked out of the window. The sheriff was accompanied by several other men. One of them requested me to open the door and let them in. I asked what they wanted.

“I am the sheriff,” said one, “and demand admittance into this house.”

“You cannot get it!” said I, very coolly.

“I am determined to get in!” said he, “and would advise, the less trouble you give, the better it will be for you”

I laughed at him and his implied threat, and told him to “go away ;” that I did not mean to give him admittance. That I considered his intrusion an outrage, and, authority or no authority, I was not to be intimidated by him. He then tried the window, but could not force it, as it was securely fastened.

He said he would “get in at the door.”

As quickly as possible, I ran and barred the door, and calmly stood at bay before my enemy. All this time, I was alone with my dear little girls, who, frightened, clung to my skirts, weeping bitterly.

In about an hour my husband returned. When he discovered the situation of affairs, he came to the window to speak with me.

In my excitement I forgot to bar the window again. This, the sheriff quickly perceived, and raising the sash, leaped in, and his companions after him.

At once he went to the door, unfastened it and told me he had authority to put us out of the house.

We requested him, if he had any such authority to produce and read it.

He would not, but tried for more than two hours to persuade us to leave the house peaceably.

I would consent to no such thing. I told him I was not going out of my house. I said: "I will not go, and I defy you to put me out."

He then stepped to the door and spoke aside to his companions; when they all turned and commenced putting my furniture out of the house. My husband stoutly resisted, but he was powerless before the superior force of the sheriff.

After they had put everything out, they came towards me, to force me. The tigress must have been strong in me at that moment. I placed myself defiantly with my back to the wall.

"Do you intend to leave these premises?" said the sheriff.

"No," said I, as calmly as my voice would permit.

"I am sorry, madam," said he, "but you will have to go."

"I shall not, sir, unless you compel me by brute force."

He came towards me.

"I will tear your eyes out!" cried I, clutching him fiercely. We had a stout struggle.

He laughed in derision, and with some fearful oaths, which I could not sully my tongue to repeat, he got one of the men to assist him, and dragged me out of the house—my poor little children, frightened, and screaming after me: "Do not kill our poor mother! Do not kill our poor mother!"

Poor Harry—my dear husband! What could he do? He was held by two of the men, while he saw his wife and children dragged out of their house, by a set of commissioned, relentless persecutors.

I took my youngest child in my arms, while the other two clung to me—almost bereft of their senses.

The window of the house had been barred—the door had been closed and locked, and there we stood mocked at and derided—an outraged family, with only the blue sky and the green leaves of the forest for a shelter.

We were not without friends, however, who were ready to open to us their hospitable doors. By advice, we went at once to a judge and a lawyer. They examined our papers, carefully sifted the evidence in the case, and told us we had been unjustly and unlawfully put out, and furnished us with written authority to return again and take possession of our home. We did so. We moved on to our land, taking our household chattels with us. We found the doors of our cot-

tage wide open, and no one near to dispute our ownership. We went in, and once more took possession of our simple little home.

It seemed then a very charming little spot, and I felt almost like kneeling down and kissing the very threshold of the door.

Harry looked very much older and paler for his recent troubles, and as I laughed at him, and called him a croaker, he said: "Be happy if you can, Rachel, but I fear we have not had the last of Brown's persecutions."

And he was right in his suspicions. It was not long before this was made evident. Brown had his emissaries, and what he could not effect by law or force he determined to accomplish by strategy. He was a cruel, envious man, and capable of any outrage.

One afternoon, I had been to make a call upon one of my neighbors, about half a mile off, and as I was returning home, between sundown and dark, and had proceeded not quite half-way, I heard some one behind me, hallooing and swearing.

I stopped and looked around. I did not see any one, and was very leisurely pursuing my way when I heard another fierce shout. I turned quickly around and observed an Irishman of the neighborhood, by the name of O'Brien, just emerging from the woods and running after me with an axe uplifted, with which he swore he intended to kill me.

I took time for one single look, and then snatching off my bonnet and shawl, I ran for my life. I was always a fast runner. You laugh, dear reader. Well, it was said, I ran "like a deer."

I now ran so fast, it seemed as though my feet scarcely touched the ground. Fear lent speed to them. I flew on, rather than ran, and never once stopped until I had reached my house, when I fell exhausted on the threshold. I fainted and when consciousness returned, I lay on my bed—my husband bent over me.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAN RAID AND THE RESCUE.

ONE pleasant morning, just six weeks after this, the sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing sweetly, and all nature appeared so smiling and happy, I felt that I could not longer remain within doors.

After the adventure detailed, I had kept myself very closely, for I knew not at what moment a foe lurking in ambush might fall upon and kill me. The spite of our enemy seemed to be directed rather towards me than my husband. Harry was a quiet, good man, and only when driven to extremes, did he ever give way to violent anger. Being myself of a more excitable temperament, it is not surprising that I should use language that infuriated, and which was not soon forgotten by Brown and his emissaries.

Well, as I began to tell you, this fine and glorious morning, I took the children and started out for a walk. There was a blithsome carol among the birds in the trees above my head, and the sky was as blue as the waters of the lake. We took a path which led us along until we came in full sight of Harry. There he was with a great fire, his big iron kettle hanging over it, boiling down sap, and making maple-sugar.

Everything around was so peaceful, and simple, and quiet, and happy—I stopped a moment to contemplate. It was extremely difficult for me to realize the

events of the last few months of my life. I tried to think of them as a terrible dream, and in the moment fervently prayed for forgiveness to all who had wronged us. It is at such times that the soul is uplifted above the grosser things of earth and asserts its kinship to the Deity.

"Come, mamma, come!" shouted Maude. "Let us run and see how soon we can get to papa."

"Yes! yes!" cried Edna, and with Melissa in front, I gave each of the younger a hand and away we ran until we came up to the place where the great kettle sent up its fragrant steam from the honeyed juice, that was rapidly settling down to glistening crystals of maple-sugar.

He was just trying the sap with a splinter. On the end hung a transparent bubble, and he knew that his work was about done.

"O papa, let me try the sugar!" said Melissa. "It is such nice fun; I like it!"

"Let me try, too!" cried Edna.

"And me, too!" chimed in Maude, and three clean, nice splinters were held by them in readiness to plunge into the boiling syrup.

"Oh, you little mischiefs!" said Harry. "If you come around me in this way you will bother me so that I can do nothing."

Pretty soon he took off the large kettle and poured the syrup out into pens to mould. Then buckets of raw sap were emptied in, the large kettle again hung over the fire, and the sugar-making proceeded.

I assisted Harry in keeping up the fire, but the children were around teasing us so that we could not work.

"I will see if I can't find something that will amuse them," said he. He left his seat and gathered up an armful of dry bushes, and, piling them higher than their heads, he set fire to the pile. Immediately there was a splendid blaze, crackling and wreathing in red and yellow and blue pennons, almost as high as some of the trees. It was a splendid sight in the grand old woods that morning, and as the dear little girls laughed and shouted around it, and Harry's face grew broader and more genial at the sight, I fancied myself so happy that nothing dare disturb me. Alas!

We remained with my husband until almost eleven o'clock, when I took the children and returned to the cottage to prepare dinner. We were in sight of the house, and not more than a quarter of a mile from the door, when Melissa started and ran on ahead of us. I saw her turn the corner of the house, and then I heard a piercing scream. I perfectly recognized her voice, and ran towards the spot as fast as my feet could carry me.

I arrived just in time to see her borne off in the arms of a gigantic Indian, who belonged to a tribe that was at that time prowling about that portion of the country.

I shrieked in utter madness and was about to pursue them, when I observed an Indian stealthily approaching from an opposite direction. He made gestures to me to stop and remain where I was. I knew him. He had been very friendly with us, and had sometimes broken bread at our table. I felt that now I might trust him, and kept my position until he came up.

By this time the roaming party had disappeared,

carrying my child with them. After they had gone, he was silent, but led me half fainting into the house, and then said : " Harry ! Where is he ? "

" Down at the sugar-works," I replied.

" Good ! " he exclaimed. " Do not go for him ! "

" I must ! I must ! my child ! my child ! " I cried.

" I go for the child ! No ! no ! I go for the child. Let Harry stay ! Take care of you ; I go for the papoose ; I follow the trail night and day, and day and night, until the pretty little one is rescued and brought back to the arms of her mother. Do not weep ! Before six suns I come back, and bring joy to the cottage ! I can say no more ! Farewell ! I go ! "

He suddenly wrenched my hand, and before I could utter a single word of thanks he was gone. I watched him in his long lope as he disappeared down through the path that sank into the depths of the woods, and I sent after him a feeble, heart-wrung prayer.

How small had seemed all of my troubles before that. Even the harshness of the sheriff and the violence of the Irishman were almost forgotten. My voice burst forth in one long cry : " O God, restore to me my child ! my darling first-born ! my dear little daughter ! "

I refused to be comforted !

Day followed day, night followed night, until six days and nights had come and gone, and the friendly Indian returned not with my lost treasure. I was very near derangement. Harry could not pursue them, as he found it impossible to get upon their trail, and could have done little alone. Indeed, his faith in the Indian was such that, although wretched himself, he sometimes tried to laugh at my fears. Six suns had risen and

set, and my hearthstone was sad and dark, for the loss of Melissa.

I began to think that my Indian friend had found that he could not rescue my child and never meant to return. Even as I sat thus thinking, the door was opened, and with a loud, clear, ringing laugh and a joyous shout, Melissa rushed into my arms. "Mamma, I am home again!"

We were so completely overcome with joy at sight of her, that, for the moment, the generous Indian was forgotten. When I did remember, I looked around, but he had disappeared.

"Where is the good Indian, Melissa?" I asked.

"He has gone, mamma; I could not make him come in."

At once I ran to the door, and, vanishing in the depths of the forest, I beheld his tall figure. I called him, but if he heard my voice he did not turn his head. He was quite out of way of a mother's thanks, but a mother sent her blessing after him, and in her prayers she never forgets to ask God's renewal of them for her dusky friend of the wilderness.

Melissa clung to her father and myself between laughing and crying—looking up into our faces, oh! with such unutterable tenderness, and kissing us with a rapture she had never expressed before.

"Can you tell us anything of your rescue?" asked Harry, as soon as the first excitement of her recovery had worn off and left room for a degree of curiosity as to the child's singular adventure.

"Do tell us!" I cried, pressing her to my bosom and bedewing her brown hair with my tears.

"Yes, mamma, the good Indian told me. He said, after he left you, he followed the trail night and day until he came in sight of us; and the third night, when they were all asleep away off near one of the great lakes, he came upon the encampment, slipped in, folded his hand upon my mouth so that I could not scream, and stole away in the darkness.

"I was terribly frightened when I found myself so rudely seized, but he whispered every moment: 'Friend! Good Indian! Take poor little white bird back to mother's nest! Hush! Hush! Pretty baby! Nice little pappoose! Good little girl! Take back to father, mother, sisters. Hush! Hush!'

"It was so dark I could not see him, but he held me as gently as you would have done, and when morning came he carried me to a kind lady's house who gave me some nice warm breakfast, and then laid me down on a clean, white little bed for me to get some sleep.

"It was quite dinner time when I awoke, and after dinner, the good Indian took me up in his arms, and tramped on and on until I got home again. I like him ever so much, and you must all like him, because he was so kind and brought me safe home again."

"Did the Indians who stole you treat you kindly?" said Harry, drawing Melissa close to his bosom.

"Oh, yes. They petted me, and gave me a great many beautiful things, and told me I was to be the child of the tribe, but I did nothing but cry and beg them to take me home to my own father and mother."

This was a new cause for anxiety with us. From that time for many weeks we could not feel exactly safe to trust the children out of our sight. But after awhile

this anxiety wore off. Harry secured a very fine watch-dog that was trained to guard our house, and then we had little fear of intrusion. The dog grew very fierce, and few could have withstood the grim array of sharp teeth that he now and then presented.

It was necessary for Harry to be frequently away from home, and often I was called out, and we left our little girls with their faithful guardian well assured that no harm would happen them.

Oh! gentle reader, in our wild-woods life I might tell of a thousand things of interest if I could at this moment recall them, but just now I can only relate the most startling—those engraven on my memory, as it were with a pen of iron. Some of them may chill the blood, but bear with me!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENEMY STRIKES AND IS STRUCK.

Two months and a half after the recovery of our little girl, Brown tried again to get us off. He could not do it by law, in that his effort had failed, and he made use of strategy.

The depths of the man's envy and cunning could not be fathomed.

We had a greater quantity of land in our tract than we could make effective, and had determined to dispose of a portion of it, and encourage a thicker settlement. We had frequently spoken of going to the nearest railroad depot, for the purpose of negotiating the sale of a hundred acres to a merchant, who had signified his wish to purchase. We accordingly started early one morning, for the trip was not a short one, and I had also some shopping to attend to.

It grieved us to think of leaving the children alone, but thought it would be foolish to call in any of the neighbors to take care of them, and told them to bar the door after we had left, and to refuse admittance to any one who might desire to come in. They were brave little girls—said they were not afraid—kissed us in high glee, and we left them with the dog for a guard. As long as they could see us from the window, they were waving their pinafores, throwing kisses and clapping their hands. We could hear the shouts

of their merry laughter even after we were out of sight, in the turning in the woods.

But they were not long undisturbed in their security. When we returned, a woful sight met our eyes, and a woful story came to our ears. Lissa told us that after we had left, Emma and herself sat down by the window, well pleased to listen to the singing of the birds and the ring of the woodman's axe far down in the forest, and to see the beautiful wild flowers transplanted in our garden, all abloom and bent under their weight of crystal dew-drops. It was a charming morning. Nature was alive with freshness and beauty, and fragrance and peace.

They were very happy, and in their artlessness, were weaving romances for the future, and childishly wondering what the great world could be, outside of their limited sphere of acquaintance.

They had not been sitting thus quietly very long, before they saw an Irishman come running down the road in great haste. When he arrived within a few paces of the house; he stopped, and putting his hand up to his face to assist his sight, blinded in the glare of sunshine, he looked off intently, many minutes, down the road. His strange manner and gestures somewhat alarming them, they left the window and took a seat beside the stove. Hearing no noise their alarm was calmed, and they laughed and talked, thinking no more about it.

After sitting awhile, they fancied a sound under the window, like the stealthy tread of a man. They looked up and beheld the same Irishman, who still seemed watching the road, as he feared the approach of some

one. Being satisfied that he was unperceived, he made an attempt to force the window.

The girls remained perfectly still and watched his movements.

"What do you want?" said Melissa.

"I want to come in!" he replied, muttering curses to himself, and looking very strangely.

"You have no business here," cried Edna, "and you must go away."

"Be Jabers, I'll show you what business I have here, I will!" swore the infuriated Irishman, "and ye had best open the window, ye had, or I'll smash it; sure's ye're born, I will!"

"We'll not open it!" said Melissa, slapping her hands, and urging the dog upon the intruder.

"Then here it goes!" cried the Irishman, at the same time driving the window in with a terrific crash.

All the while the dog kept up a barking that was deafening to hear.

With one bound the man leaped from the ground to the window, and into the house.

Edna had called the dog to her side, patted and caressed him, saying: "Now, Watch, brave old fellow, be our friend! Oh, here, Watch! Take him!" The dog sprang towards him, and they expected every moment to have seen him torn to pieces. He had aimed at the man's throat, but with a dexterous movement, the Irishman grappled the dog by the collar, and held him at arms length, quietly gazing into his eyes.

He released his hold upon the dog, which retreated, growling and barking angrily, but refusing any more decided hostility to the ruthless invader.

After quieting the dog, or at least, after intimidating the animal, he proceeded to put the furniture out of the house.

When Melissa and Edna discovered his intention, they went to the bed upon which Maude was still lying, she, having gone back for another nap after we had left, got her up, and dressed her, for in a few moments the poor frightened children were ordered to leave the house. They ran off to the woods, in tears and agony, not knowing what to do.

About this time O'Brien's girl appeared to give him assistance in his villanous work—for O'Brien was the Irishman who again came to torment us, as the instrument of Brown.

He told her to watch around the premises, and when she saw us approaching, to blow a blast on the horn with which he had supplied her, so that he might be ready for any emergency.

While my husband, the merchant and myself sat conversing together in reference to the contemplated sale of a portion of our land, I noticed a single horseman coming up towards the store. He rode hurriedly up to the house, reined in his panting steed, dismounted, and as he was rapidly proceeding up the path to the store, I recognized our neighbor John La Rue. My heart misgave me. I felt that he was the bearer of evil tidings. With trembling limbs I ran out to meet him, and prayed him to tell me what was the matter.

"The Irishman, O'Brien," said he, "sent by Brown, has broken into your house and is putting the furniture out."

"My children? where are they?" I cried.

"I cannot tell. I did not see them," said La Rue. "I suppose they have taken shelter in the woods. They should have come to my house, but did not."

"O God!" I cried. "My poor little girls!"

My very worst fears were excited, and I felt that I was almost a maniac.

"Calm yourself, my good woman," said La Rue.

"Calm! How can I be calm?" I exclaimed.

La Rue led me into the store, where he told Harry and the merchant the whole story.

He said he had been travelling all the forenoon in different directions to find us and have a stop put to such revengeful and lawless proceedings.

When the merchant heard of it he said nothing, but, taking down his gun, he loaded it, and handing it to Harry said: "Take this gun, Mr. Watson, and if O'Brien attempts any further depredations upon your premises *shoot him dead!*"

My heart recoiled at the terrible advice, but in the extremity it seemed the only thing left for Harry to do.

He thanked him and accepted the gun. After bidding him good-by, we started, first to search for our children, and then to seek our poor, dismantled home. It was past three o'clock in the afternoon when we came in sight of it. What my feelings were it would be powerless in any one to imagine; I cannot correctly depict them!

We found our wretched little girls sitting on the grass by the roadside, and near them the girl of O'Brien, who, immediately upon seeing us, placed the horn to her mouth and blew a blast, long and loud. Harry

took the two youngest children, Edna and Maude, and hastened with them into the house ; shut and barred the door, and then, taking some boards, nailed them on—securing the window from the inside.

He had but just completed his work when O'Brien came. I wish that my terrible story could end at this point, but alas ! it cannot. Oh ! that day ! I wish I could forget it ! It hangs upon my memory—a black scroll, written all over with blood ! O'Brien climbed up on the ends of the logs at the corner of the house, and deliberately went to work to knock off some of the clapboards with his axe in order to secure an entrance upon the roof. After he had accomplished this he came in—axe in hand—swearing he intended to kill the whole family. Harry heard him talking overhead, and going to the door that leads upstairs, he saw him open it and stand for a moment as if debating in his own mind what step he should take next.

Was it an evil genius that goaded on the man ? He had no cause for quarrel with us, and Brown's bribe could not have been so great as to make him willing to sell his soul. Ah ! if he had stopped just there, and had permitted his better nature to have had a voice ; but he did not !

Lifting the axe—with a furious scowl deforming his countenance, he made ready to descend—declaring all the while in horrid oaths that he “intended to kill every d—l of an Watson ”—he did. Oh ! it was fearful, beyond description. My husband was prepared for him, and shouted to him to come no farther, or he was a dead man.

He laughed in awful mockery and brandished his axe. He seemed more demon than man.

"For God's sake, go back!" cried Harry, "for if you advance another step I shall put a ball through you." He was trembling with excitement.

"You will!" said O'Brien. "Then we shall see," accompanying every word with a disgraceful oath. Harry lifted his gun. O'Brien saw the gesture, but heeded not the threatening. He advanced a few steps farther down.

Harry once more warned him to return. "Go back for your life!" he cried; "or, I fire!"

Still he came on! Was it a fiend of darkness that impelled him, or was it destiny?

He lifted and brandished his axe with a fierce smile. Harry again raised his gun, and *fired!*

There was a single shriek, suppressed by a gurgling groan, and, dropping the axe from his nerveless grasp, O'Brien staggered, fell forward against the side of the stairway, and in a few moments expired!

The ball had penetrated his forehead, and, lodging near the base of the brain, caused his death almost instantly.

There was a rush to the house at the sound of the report. A great pool of blood dabbled the floor. Seeing which I fainted!

CHAPTER IX.

HARRY IN DURANCE.

AFTER a long pause, during which to relieve my pent-up emotions by a flood of tears, I pursue my touching narrative.

I have often thought, that interval of entire oblivion was a most blessed providence.

I was aroused from it, as from a deep sleep, and I have sometimes imagined since that then I experienced the blissful and perfect rest of the grave.

I looked around and could not tell where I was! There were a number of faces beaming over me and the first expression that fell upon my quickened hearing was: "She is alive! She is alive!"

"Where am I?" I asked. "Do tell me!"

I heard a confusion of sounds, sprang partly up, and slowly a dim recollection of the awful tragedy that had been enacted in my cottage returned to my awakening mind.

"My husband! Harry! My Harry! Where is he?"

"Very near you!" said one.

"Is he? Is he—*dead?*"

"No, be quiet. You will see him after a while!"

"He killed!—he killed O'Brien—didn't he?"

"Yes," said a friend in a low voice. "He killed him!"

"Oh, my God!" I cried in agony. "My God! My God!"

I felt a faintness—death-like—stealing over me. The earth, the trees, the faces around me, the sky—all seemed melting, melting into a blue haze, in which I floated—an immaterial mass of—I could not tell what.

My face was sprinkled with water, water was placed to my lips, while my cold and stiffening hands were clasped. I opened my eyes again. I knew all that was passing around me. I prayed to die! I had been taken from the house, and was supported in the arms of a friend, on the fresh green grass—under the shade of a spreading beach, with the wild breeze fanning my temples.

I looked down upon my hands, and almost fancied them stained with blood. I shuddered.

During the period of my unconsciousness, quite a large crowd had collected around our house, for ill news never needs a messenger. Among others, were all of O'Brien's family, consisting of his wife, his daughters and two sons. How I pitied them, and would have given worlds to relieve their agony. His two sons ran up to the house, armed with stones, to do what violence they could.

My husband saw them coming, and called to them to stand back and make no rash attempt, or he would shoot them in their tracks. He had been terribly infuriated and stood like a lion at bay. His face glowed with anger, and his eyes were blood-shot. I can never forget his appearance. I covered my eyes with my hands—to hide him from me.

While all this was going on, I stood in the yard in front of the house, more really mad than in my senses. As I was standing there, one of the sons of O'Brien

picked up an immense stone, and was in the very act of hurling it at my head, when his mother providentially caught his hand and prevented the execution of his foul purpose.

There were yells and cries all around me, like the cries and yells of maniacs. Harry was locked up in the house. They demanded his coming forth. He would not. Finally, they applied a blazing torch to the house, and swore they would burn him up in it, or kill him if he made an attempt to escape.

It soon began to blaze, and a black wreath of smoke curled up above it and floated away over the trees. It was the pyre of my home.

I was frantic. I tried to rush in and save my husband and children, but strong hands restrained me. I shouted to Harry and told him they had set fire to the house, and if he could not escape himself to let the children out. With the force of a giant, he ripped the boards from the window, and Edna and Maude, frightened until they were almost speechless, were thrust forth. They sprang to my side, clasped, each of them, one of my hands, and covered them with their tears.

"O mamma!" they cried; "our poor, poor papa! He will be burnt up? He will be burnt alive! Oh! it is almost roasting in there, now!"

"Hush, my children! For Heaven's sake, hush! if you would not drive me stark mad!"

"Mamma! can't we do something? Will nobody save our dear, dear father?"

"Did your dear, dear father save my father?" said one of O'Brien's daughters, coming up and rudely shaking her fist in the face of Edna.

"He ought to roast alive! he ought!" she exclaimed—looking like a very fury—her hair streaming in the wind.

"Poor girl!" I said, "poor young girl!" while my strained eyeballs watched the swift demolition of all upon which my hopes for life were anchored. "I forgive your wrath, but I cannot restore your dead."

The fire was now fast spreading, until one whole side of the house was in a blaze. It crackled and flashed—sending up whole sheets of sparks—like tiny meteors—drifting away in mocking beauty over the tall forest-trees. The western wind sprang up and twisted the flame in fantastic banners—flaunting in relentless triumph over the work of destruction.

I now thought that there was no possible chance to save my husband. His rescue from the burning house would be but to throw him into the hands of those who stood sworn to take his life. Between being burned alive, and seeing him murdered before my eyes—how could I—which was I—to choose? O God! was ever wife and mother so tried?

I looked on until my brain seemed on fire, and I felt ready to curse myself for my impotence. My little girls clustered around me. "Mamma, what shall we do?"

I fell upon my knees, and there with the flames of my bridal home roaring in my ears, the wind sweeping the sparks over my head, the blue sky and the green of the trees bending above us, I sent up a wailing petition to high Heaven, that my dear, dear husband, that the father of my poor little girls, might be saved from the fire; might be saved from a death of violence—

from the hands of enemies ! I was strengthened ! I felt, that if there was a God in heaven, he could not refuse to reject the outpourings of a breaking heart.

I stood upon my feet and looked around. My prayer was answered—even in that moment. I saw the constable approaching, and hailed him as a Heaven-sent deliverer. With him was a posse of men, all armed with authority to suppress violence, and protect the suffering. They arrived just in time, to rescue Harry from death by suffocation. I could have shouted ; but he was scarcely safe yet. It was almost more than they could do, to prevent my husband's being murdered by the O'Briens, although in the custody of the law.

There was a fierce altercation, in the midst of which, my husband was placed in the constable's carriage and driven off to prison, without a word of farewell to his wife ; without a word of farewell to his little girls ; without the kiss, that never before since he had been my husband and their father, had we missed upon ever so short a separation. Yes ; he was gone—gone from us—gone to prison ! the inmate of a felon's cell ! for murder ! for taking the life of a fellow-man, whose gory corpse lay helpless and harmless before my eyes ! but I thanked God for his prison-cell ? I looked at my little log-house—the wilderness home to which I had been borne, a simple, artless trusting, happy bride—now fast smouldering to a heap of shapeless ashes before my eyes ; as the broad rays of the setting sun cast long, deep shadows over the forest, I beheld the wreck of hopes ; I saw the blasted prospect of the future ; the cruel taunts of the world upon the children of a homi-

cide, and I thanked God, it was no worse! In my grateful heart I sang:

“ When all thy mercies, oh, my God,
My rising soul surveys;
Transported with the view I’m lost
In wonder, love, and praise! ”

Truly we know not what a day may bring forth. When I arose that morning, before daybreak had shed its pearly tint upon the treetops, I had never felt a purer sense of security. The sun rose upon my husband and myself as we were on our way to negotiate a business arrangement for the future comfort and well being of the children that God had given us, undreaming of trouble. Noon came with a warning. Evening saw me shelterless—dependent upon friends for supper and bed—my home in ruins—my husband—his hands red with a brother’s blood—a felon in the hospitable quarters of the county jail—and yet, before I left the wreck of my home, I sank again upon my knees and thanked God.

I thanked him for the rescue of my children from the fire! I thanked him that my dear husband shed blood alone in defence of his own life! I thanked Him that my husband had not been permitted to perish in the flames, or at the hands of an infuriated avenger! I thanked God for the establishment of the civil law, which might discriminate between what was crime and what not! I thanked him for the gift of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed to wash away all sin—even the sin of blood-shedding!

CHAPTER X.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

As I come to this point in my life, my head is bowed upon my hands in the silent work of retrospection. Edna stole up to my side and taking one of my hands sighed: "Dear mamma." This significant movement recalled me to my self-possession, and, lifting my head, I exclaimed: "Is it not a wonder I lived through it all? Yes! yes, it is. How much the human heart can bear! It seems quite as elastic as gas, and yet can bear a greater pressure than stone!"

After my husband had been driven off to prison, kind Mr. La Rue took me with my children to his house. But there, 'we could not be safe' for a single moment. The avengers of O'Brien's death had constituted themselves a mob—keenly anxious to wreak harm on some one.

In a few minutes the brother of John La Rue came with a horse and wagon and took my children and myself from the excited neighborhood. We were carried to a friend's—a Mr. Eveleigh's—more than thirty miles distant. We did not have time to change our dress. My little girls had been preparing for bed, and snatching up some shawls and throwing around them, we were put into the wagon and hastily driven off.

But this did not quell the excitement. The infuriated mob seemed determined to secure a victim upon whom to wreak their revenge. They were more than

fifty Irishmen present, who set out in search of Brown to kill him. They chased him to his house, and, running for his life, he was compelled to plead and use the most extraordinary exertions to prevent the execution of their threatenings. Nothing more horrible could be imagined than a mob drunk with passion. The thirst for blood exceeds even the stories told of the wild beasts in the jungles of India.

Brown was not a brave man, and his cowardly pleadings at last awakening their contempt, they left him to muse over the consequences of his wickedness.

While all this was going on, we were being driven rapidly away from the scene. I will not attempt to depict my feelings as I turned my back upon the ruins of my home and found myself in the darkling woods, with the new moon hanging her silver crescent over the western horizon—dimly seen through the trees; and the gentle stars peeping out one by one—silent sentinels over the stilly night—looking down into my aching eyes and mirroring themselves in the tears that hung upon my cheeks like tender, sympathetic kisses. Sweet comfort there is in tears.

We lost no time on the route. Attached to our wagon were a pair of strong, faithful horses, which seemed instinct with the necessity of the occasion and scarcely needed urging to hasten them on as fast as their utmost speed could carry them. We were very nearly five hours in making the trip, but at last arrived in safety.

I need scarcely say we were kindly received. Their hospitable doors were quickly thrown open and the best cheer their simple establishment afforded was placed at our convenience.

"And, Mr. Eveleigh," I said, "you do not refuse to extend shelter and comfort to the wife and children of a homicide?"

"The wife and children of a homicide?" he echoed. "Must a man have his whole family butchered before his eyes, and withhold his hand from vengeance, because, perchance, he may deprive a ruffian of life? I should have killed O'Brien if the rope to hang me had been dangling above my head—the next moment to find itself around my neck, with the knot under my right ear."

"Then you do not regard my husband—my good and noble Harry—a murderer!"

"A murderer? No!" he exclaimed. "The pity is that Brown could not have shared the same fate as O'Brien; for he is indeed the real murderer. Law is sometimes a sad farce. Why was not Brown put under arrest for instigating the hellish deed? He deserves a cell in the penitentiary!"

"He will make it appear that he was the aggrieved party—through the persistent efforts of the Irish to secure his person—and will manage to get them all put in bonds to keep the peace."

"Aha! Well may Justice be painted blind. I am sure, if she kept only one eye open, she would discard her high estate and throw aside her scales in disgust," said Mr. Eveleigh.

"He has been a most relentless enemy, and it all seems with the fixed intent to force us from our simple little estate," I replied.

"A bother on him!" cried Mr. Eveleigh. "I hope if he ever succeeds that blight and mildew and famine

and death may seize upon his effects as did the plagues upon the Egyptians."

It was quite daybreak before I thought of lying down for a moment's rest. My poor little girls were asleep. I looked down upon them in their innocent slumber and prayed to God in judgment to remember mercy. I lay down, but only to think and watch and pray. The morning sunshine soon came streaming in through the eastern window. I got up and looked out, almost unable to realize my situation.

CHAPTER XI.

COMFORT IN PRISON.

THE dislike that was evinced towards my husband extended to John La Rue after the outrage upon our home. He was subjected to continual annoyance, and soon found that it was impossible to live there in peace after showing us so much kindness. He was compelled to keep a constant watch, and said he "should not have been surprised at any time to have been awakened with the cry of fire over his head." He was in the habit of getting up three or four times every night and looking around to see that all was safe.

Under such circumstances, he determined to leave the neighborhood. He was not a coward, but could not endure the perpetual dread and irritation to which he was subjected.

Before leaving, he made me a visit at Mr. Eveleigh's. Oh! he was ever as kind and thoughtful and sympathizing as a brother: had always some words of cheer, some words of hope, some words of encouragement, some words of comfort to whisper to my sickened soul. He was the friend in need, and never, as I pour out my tried heart before God, that I do not remember to ask a kind Providence to look over, guard and keep and bless him in sleep or awake; in his going out and his coming in; in basket and store; in all his ways. He accompanied me on a visit to my husband in his

prison. Poor Harry! I shall never forget how his face brightened up as the key turned in the heavy lock and he opened his arms to embrace his wife. His head drooped on my neck and his frame was shaken with convulsive sobs. As soon as he could command his voice, he whispered: "God bless you, Rachel! God bless you, my dear wife! God bless you, my guardian angel!"

"My husband! Oh, my beloved husband!" I cried. I could say no more at the time, but clung to him as though it might have been our last embrace, while he raised my head and looked into my eyes. "Be quiet, my wife! Everything will work right in the end!" He said this as calmly as if in our own home.

"Oh, my husband! Everything seems so dark now." I shuddered as I turned to look at his prison cell, and through the narrow window with its close iron grating.

"Well, my dear, let us console ourselves with the knowledge of the fact that the darkest hour is always just before the dawn."

"I dread, Harry, and I fear."

"*Dread* and *fear*, what?"

"That the darkest hour has not yet come to us."

"What do you mean, Rachel?"

"O Harry, on your trial the jury may be bribed, your lawyer may prove a traitor, all of the circumstances of the killing of O'Brien may be made to yield to the fact that you shot him, and——"

"And what, my wife?"

"And—O Harry!" I could not finish the terrible sentence."

"Then I will finish it for you," said he, with the faintest shadow of a smile breaking over his sad countenance. "And—my husband may be hanged!"

"Or—O Harry!"

"Rachel, you are getting to be a sad coward, little woman. Your nerves are playing false to you. Cheer up! Or—your husband may find hospitable quarters in the state-prison?"

"Harry, how can you speak so calmly?"

"Because, my wife, I shot a ruffian to save to you a husband, and to your children a father. My hands are stained with blood, but not my soul. Before God, that is as stainless of blood as the soul of an infant. Man may convict me of murder, but God—never! Man may decree an ignominious death, but the eye of God will see in it no shame. Man may condemn me to the convict's cell and the association of the vile, the lawless, and the degraded—with a conscience void of offence, and a firm faith in the mercy of our Redeemer, I can smile at the taunts of the world, and my prison livery will be dignified into a garb of honor. The evil is in the intention, my dear, and not in the act."

"But the world usually judges of the intention by the act, Harry."

"It is not always a proper rule for judging, though I grant that to human insight it is the only general rule upon which to base conclusions, and we should not quarrel that the exceptions are so rarely looked to."

"Suppose the exception is not admitted in your case?"

"We will suppose nothing, my wife, until I am called before a jury and confront any witnesses who may pos-

sess information in the case. See how I am faring ! It seems I have some friends, although I am only a poor felon !”

He took me to his bed and showed me a comfortable pillow that had been sent him by some one unknown ; uncovered a dish, in which there were a few delicacies not reckoned in the prison fare, a pitcher of ice water, and half-a-dozen books—the blessed Bible, a bundle of tracts—sweet comforters in hours of anguish and doubt—and a daily paper. “ It seem, Rachel, there are some who sympathize and desire to smooth my pathway to the gallows or the penitentiary, if they do not believe me guiltless of murder in the first degree. But we will not talk of these terrible probabilities, my wife. Tell me of my children—of my little woman Melissa, of Edna, and of Maude, our baby girl.” His face was very bright when he spoke of our children, and as I watched the old fatherly pride-kindling his eyes, I almost forgot my misery.

I had a long story to recount of a thousand little things they had said and done, but when I tried to tell him of their gentleness and care for me, and of their terrible anxiety for him, my fortitude gave way and the walls of the prison echoed my heart-wrung sobs.

“ My poor little wife !” he whispered, while he laid my head on his bosom and covered my brow and hair with kisses.

“ Stop, Rachel,” he said. “ We will not talk of things that cut to the core. Look above and beyond this. I do not think any jury—unless suborned—can possibly convict me, and even if they should, I feel

perfectly willing, with all the evidence before him, to rely upon the clemency of the Governor; and if human mercy fails, I know I am not afraid to stand before the bar of God and answer for the unfortunate death of the man I wronged neither by thought, word nor deed."

I cannot begin to remember all that passed that day in the prison, but I cannot forget the lofty courage and resolution that bore him above the evil of the hour and strengthened me to look for bright days still in the future.

You have doubtless heard that living troubles were very much harder to bear than sorrow for the dead. If you have never experienced the truth, let me tell you. We bury our dead in the hope of a blessed resurrection beyond the grave and a reunion with the saints in light; but a living sorrow dogs our heels like an avenging spectre, and hovers over our sleep a nightmare so hideous that we fear to sleep lest we dream; and we fear to dream lest the waking spectre confront us with all the horrors of a whip of scorpions.

Mr. La Rue returned with me to Mr. Eveleigh's, and when he bade us good-by it was with the expectation of removing his residence to some less dangerous locality.

I could not bear to be dependent upon Mr. Eveleigh for a home, and told him "if I could get a family to go with me, I should return and take possession of Mr. La Rue's house." After a day's search Mr. Eveleigh succeeded in securing a family to accompany me; but, by some means, Brown heard that I was coming, and had La Rue's house torn down to the ground. So there

was no shelter for me, and I was compelled to forego my resolution.

One would suppose I was telling a border story if they did not know differently, and I almost blush with shame when I think of the defiance to which the law is subjected, despite all of its august majesty.

CHAPTER XII.

VENGEANCE UNSATISFIED.

THE revengeful purposes of our enemies did not terminate with my leaving the neighborhood. I was followed up with most fiendish malice.

The reader will seem surprised at this, and well he may, but if he could begin to imagine the recklessness and contempt of public opinion that exists in these remote communities, he could more readily realize the truthfulness of my story.

I had been at Mr. Eveleigh's about a week, when, one afternoon, he was called from home on business of importance, and did not expect to return before midnight. It was very necessary to be careful. There were sometimes lawless characters prowling around who would not hesitate to make the entry of houses for the intent of plunder when a suitable opportunity presented itself. It was scarcely safe for women to be left alone after nightfall.

Before it grew dark, on the evening in question, Mrs. Eveleigh locked the doors securely and I put the children to bed. Innocent little creatures, they knelt by my knees and prayed that God would take care of us all at Mr. Eveleigh's and bring him home safely before twelve o'clock, and that He would comfort and cheer their poor father in jail.

"Do you think, mamma," said Maude, "that God can see dear papa through the thick jail walls?"

"Yes, my little dear, he can see your poor dear papa as plainly through the thick jail walls as in the open air."

"God is so good, mamma!" said the child.

"Yes, He is all-wise, powerful, and good."

"Then He will set our dear papa free, and send us all home again?"

"If it is right, my child."

"But it will be right, mamma! You know it will be right, and God will think so too!"

"Hush, my daughter, you must not talk so. It is very wicked, God knows what is best for us, and we must patiently abide his will, it matters not what it may be."

Edna drew up close by my side and looking around, into my eyes—her own opened wide—"Mamma," she said, "if it is God's will to let our poor papa be hung will you think it is right?"

"I will try to think so, my daughter."

"But, mamma, you know he is a good man."

"Yes, I believe he is a purely good man."

"Then I do not think God would do right to let him be hanged," said the little girl indignantly.

"If God sees it will be for the best, it will be right."

The children looked at me very strangely. They could not understand the full resignation of will to the will of God; and who does?

Our faith often proves exceedingly feeble when it calls for the sacrifice of some cherished purpose or object, and we shirk its requirements with a sad cowardice.

"Mamma, do you think we must pray stronger?" said Maude, feeling that the strength of her supplications would indicate the measure of her faith.

"Yes, my child, you must pray with so much fervor that you will not let God go without the promise of a blessing. You remember old Jacob, do you not?" said I, pointing to my Bible.

"Yes," exclaimed the children, as they retired with a prayer upon their lips.

Mrs. Eveleigh and myself did not retire as early as usual, but sat up talking and reading until the clock struck ten.

(For you must remember that we observed very primitive and rational customs, and went to bed "with the lamb to rise with the lark.")

Mrs. Eveleigh gave a little start of surprise and said : "Dear me ! It is ten o'clock ! We must to bed ! I had no idea it was so late !"

We then knelt in prayer—asking the Lord to watch over and keep us from all dangers and perils of the night ; "but," we prayed, "if it is thy holy will, O God, that it should be otherwise—that trouble should come to us in the darkness, O Lord, guide and direct us how to act and what to say, for Jesus Christ's sake ! Amen !"

On the whole it was a strange prayer. Did I have a premonition of evil that induced its peculiar phraseology ? I think not. I never in my life experienced a sense of more perfect security. The night was still. The stars were shining brightly, and all nature invited to healthy repose.

After an interchange of good wishes, we retired to bed. I soon fell asleep, and slept soundly for, per-

haps, an hour. About half-past eleven o'clock I was awakened by a great noise outside of the house and an uproarious thumping at the door. The whole house was shaken!

I jumped from my bed and ran to the window to look out. Then, as fast as my limbs would carry me, I ran into Mrs. Eveleigh's room. She was already sitting up in bed—looking very much frightened.

"What on earth can be the matter, Rachel?" she cried. "The noise I heard just now was enough to shake the house to its very foundation."

"There are three or four men at the door!" I exclaimed in a whisper.

"What do they want?"

"They want me, I suspect!"

"What can they wish of you?"

"They wish to kill me!"

"To kill you? You are crazy!"

"Well, you will see!" I replied calmly.

"Go to bed, Rachel. They are doubtless some travellers that have come along and wish shelter for the night. Go to bed, and I will get up and see them."

"For Heaven's sake, Mrs. Eveleigh!" I cried, "do not expose yourself! My fears tell me I am correct. I will see them. You shall not expose yourself to their insults and their violence!"

Before she could hinder me, I had snatched up the gun that stood in the corner, to defend myself if necessary, and very nearly behind the door.

Mrs. Eveleigh was up and by my side. She whispered: "Rachel, the gun is loaded! Shoot if you are driven to it!"

I was strong then. Not a nerve quivered. I felt a perfect recklessness of death and danger. We had no time to confer longer. There was an awful crash! The door fell from its hinges! Mrs. Eveleigh uttered a piercing scream and fell senseless at my feet!

I raised the gun! The men laughed derisively and said: "So you really think to frighten us away, my pretty woman?"

"What is the meaning of this midnight intrusion?" I asked, without the slightest tremor in my voice.

"Ha! ha!" mockingly laughed one. "What is the meaning of this midnight intrusion? She makes use of very grand language. It's as good as a play. We *mean* to have *you*!"

"Me!"

"Yes, you! and no one else. Do you know me?"

Alas! I did know him, and only too well. His eyes gleamed out with tiger-like ferocity beneath the brim of his hat.

"I am the son of O'Brien. The man murdered by your husband, and Harry Watson's wife shall suffer for Harry Watson's crime."

For a single moment I trembled and lost my self-command, then, in a voice that was fearfully husky in its earnestness, I said: "Harry Watson is no murderer, and his wife has no fear of his false accusers."

"Then she *shall* fear!" exclaimed O'Brien, moving a step nearer me.

"Beware!" I cried. "This is no child's play! The gun is loaded! Advance but one step nearer and I shall fire on *you*!"

"My doom is sealed then!" he said tauntingly.

"Your doom is sealed!"

His laugh rang out: "Woman, you are a fool!" and made a movement approaching me.

I pulled the trigger!

There was a blinding flash, a deafening report, a loud scream!

I fell back and leaned against the door facing for support. For an instant the shock rendered me insensible. I thought I had killed him and began to tremble. The most terrible sensations seized me. Was I, indeed, a murderess? All justification in self-defence failed me, and I stood a convicted culprit before them.

When the smoke had cleared away sufficiently for me to see, I beheld O'Brien apparently unharmed, and joy in my soul filled the place of anguish. But soon I discovered blood slowly trickling down his face. Then he had been wounded slightly—not killed!

Even while I was making this observation, one of the men came around behind us—entered the door and extinguished the candle-light. We screamed! We were now in total darkness. Hearing the noise my little children were aroused from their sleep and came weeping and imploring us to tell them what was the matter. I could not. In the midst of the confusion I felt myself grappled from behind me, and the gun wrenched from my grasp.

I uttered the most piercing screams, when one of the ruffians placed his hand over my mouth and dragged me from the house amid the cries of Mrs. Eveleigh and my little girls. Again I suppose I was insensible, for I offered not the slightest resistance. Mrs. Eveleigh

pleaded for mercy for me ! They were deaf to all entreaties. I was bound and placed upon a horse, and driven rapidly on with the infuriated wretches.

Their work had been done quickly—almost more quickly than I can relate it.

Mr. Eveleigh did not return until all was over. We did not travel far before they halted for consultation. I must have been in a sort of stupor, for I felt so inert that I could not speak, and did not realize that several hours passed in the woods.

It was quite daybreak when they set forward again, and I knew from the direction they took that they proposed taking me to O'Brien's home.

Just then I saw a party of men approaching—soon discovered they were Indians—and to my delight recognized the brave Indian who had rescued Melissa. A shout of joy issued from my lips. "Save me !" I cried. "Save me from the white man !"

Could a more direct and effectual appeal have been made, to all the feelings of humanity, gallantry, and revenge, that stir the soul of an Indian, than this ?

A loud, exultant yell rang through the forest and awoke its slumbering echoes.

"Save me ! Save me !" I cried.

"Ugh ! Ugh !" shouted the Indian, as he drew his arrow upon the string and let it fly at the man who held the bridle of my horse.

The man relaxed his grasp upon the bridle, uttered a loud imprecation, and fell from the saddle.

The party consisted of four. They had been surprised, and before they could make proper resistance

one of them was killed, one wounded—the two remaining turned and fled.

As I was then taken from the horse I fainted in the Indian's arms. Of the circumstances of my return I can tell nothing. When I awoke to consciousness I found myself lying on a couch in Mr. Eveleigh's house, and Mrs. Eveleigh bending over me and bathing my face and head with water. I had a sweet, soothing sense of feebleness, as an infant may be supposed to have, looking to its nurse or mother to do even the work of thinking for it.

I am sure my eyes must have looked strange questions, for Mrs. Eveleigh said: "Rachel, all is right. Just go to sleep like a good woman, and don't bother about anything."

She placed her fingers on my wrist.

"Am I sick?" I asked.

"A little."

"What is the matter?"

"Not much."

I thought. "Ah! yes, I know now! They took me away. I didn't kill him! No, I didn't kill him! Thank God!"

"No, poor Rachel, you did not kill him!"

"Mrs. Eveleigh, that was a terrible night."

"Yes," she replied quietly.

"Was it very long ago?"

"Not very."

"My children, are they all alive?"

"All alive."

I seized her hand and pressed it to my lips.

"Do not agitate yourself, Rachel. You children are

well, but you have been very sick. For their sake take care of yourself."

Again my mind ran over the events I have been feebly trying to depict to the reader. It seemed like a confused dream. I felt as if I were unwinding a maze that appeared to have no ending. At length the thread began to straighten out, and with a gush of grateful emotion, I cried: "The good Indian! where, oh, where is he? Call him! He must be around here! He took care of me last night! Call him! I wish to thank him!"

She smiled. "He has not been around for several days. He has gone. He would scorn thanks for a mere act of humanity."

I sighed: "The second time! He must think me as ungrateful as a heathen!"

"No," said Mrs. Eveleigh, he is of the genuine stamp of Nature's nobility. When he sees the need of a good action to his fellow-man he performs it, and without desiring thanks, takes comfort of his own conscience!"

I had talked so long—with a fervor which enjoined silence—Mrs. Eveleigh was about to leave my room, when I beckoned her to me. "Have you heard from Harry?"

"Mr. La Rue called here yesterday on his way from a visit to him. He is well and in very cheerful spirits, except from anxiety for you."

"Then he knows all?"

"Yes, he knows all!"

My little Edna just then peeped in at the door. At sight of her the pent-up agony of my soul burst

forth. I folded my hands across my eyes and I felt the hot tears gush out as the unloosened waters of a dyke. "Come to me! Oh, come to me! my children!" I gently implored.

They rushed in and I folded them in my tired arms, as a hen would shield her storm-beaten brood. It is a wonder I did not die! For many days after the fever was broken I lay helpless as an infant.

I had almost daily news from my husband. He continued well, and I felt the necessity of garnering my little awakening strength to take me to his side once more.

Oh! the holy love of a wife! It is no sham, but a living reality! The very breath and essence with motherhood of the felicity of Eden; and this, when true, is always purified in suffering, as gold is in the chemist's crucible.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GHOST PLEADS FOR FORGIVENESS.

MY convalescence was rapid—accelerated, I have no doubt, by my determination to be well enough to be again with my husband

As soon as I was strong enough to make the trip, and some days before my friends would have permitted it, had I awaited their judgment of my ability, I took my children and wended my way to Harry's prison.

Notwithstanding his cheerfulness, he was pale, and there was that in his expression which told of the heavy inroads of anxiety upon his constitution. When he saw me he folded me in his arms and whispered :
“ My poor bruised, suffering wife ! ”

I laughed through my tears. I did not intend to weep, but physical weakness had impaired the strength of my mind, and despite all my resolves to be brave, my feelings when I saw him would not be restrained. In reference to his conviction for murder, he seemed even more doubtful than at first. Public sympathy had been manifested towards him in the most demonstrative manner ; and feeling certain, if no false witnesses were found to testify against him, that no jury could fail to acquit him, he had little fear of the results of his trial. The danger was in suborned testimony. He was perfectly acquainted with the malice of Brown and the vindictiveness of the O'Briens, and did entertain

some anxiety lest his life or his freedom might be sold for their purposes. We frequently visited him and combated this fear. He sometimes seemed overburdened with something that he would strive to shake off, but when I questioned him he would waive satisfactory replies to me and say : "O Rachel, it is nothing!"

"Tell me, Harry, I implore you, what it is that troubles you," I one day said to him after he had kissed and petted our children, and had sent them to play with the jailor's children.

"Rachel," said he, "I am afraid I am getting superstitious."

"Nonsense! Harry," I exclaimed, laughing at the ambiguous expression on his countenance.

"Do you believe in apparitions?"

I could not answer him candidly, for since the singular warning I had had before the death of my little boys, I have not been prepared to say that I could admit no such idea.

"Has an apparition appeared to you?" I asked—waiving a reply to his question.

"There has," he said firmly.

"Perhaps you dreamed, Harry. Some dreams are so vivid as to deceive us into the belief that we have actually passed through the experiences that characterize our dreams."

"I am perfectly aware of that, Rachel. But I did not dream, Rachel. I saw and felt and heard."

"We see and feel and hear in dreams, Harry. There are none of the senses that are not subject to waking sensations in dreams."

"Well," said he gloomily, "I should be very sorry to think it nothing more than a dream, for through life it must be a fountain of such comfort to me as I can secure from no other source ; not even from the testimony of my own conscience that the unfortunate deed for which I am imprisoned was committed purely in self-defence. Do not tell me it was only a dream !" he cried, pacing the floor of his cell, and clasping his forehead with his right hand.

"Well, Harry, I shall not !" I exclaimed. "Tell me what it is, and let me decide."

I must confess that I rather dreaded the revelation, for I am by no means inclined to indulge faith in the supernatural, and very charily approach the boundaries of the mystical and the unknown.

"My regret," he commenced, "that I was forced to kill O'Brien, had become so enormous that, like a mighty mountain, it seemed crushing the spirit out of me, and the cheerfulness that you noticed in me was at best the reaction of gloom that I experienced when alone. This," he continued, "preyed upon me until I was well nigh robbed of all sleep. I would turn and toss upon my bed until, from sheer exhaustion, I would fall into a stupor that hardly seemed slumber.

"Are there any ghosts about this establishment ?" I said to the jailor one morning when he came up with my breakfast.

"Ghosts ?" echoed the jailor. "Well, I can't tell. I have never seen any, but they do say there be such things hereabouts, and p'raps everybody's eyes weren't made to see such things. My wife tells me so, and says as she and her mother, when she comes to spend

the night with us, have seen some most uncommon sights. You know there have been several men hung in this jail-yard, and one cut his throat in this very cell. Sometimes my wife and my old mother-in-law see very strange sights ; but I don't know, I guess when a body's dead and buried he's not apt to come back fast.'

" 'And you've never seen ghosts yourself?

" 'Never in my life, sir. But I kind o' think if I was to see one I should speak him and find out whether he was not flesh and blood.'

" 'You would speak him, would you?' I said.

" 'Yes, sir. But why? why? Have you seen anything?'

" 'No matter,' I replied. But I determined to speak to my ghost the next time he made his appearance. That night he did not return as usual, for, indeed, I got to sleep much earlier, and then I dreamed, Rachel. I dreamed I saw you pinioned and dragged out of our house by four men, and carried away from me into a forest that was interminable. Out of this dream I awakened myself with a shuddering shriek and felt all you endured, my wife, from your brutal captors."

I listened to his story with staring eyes, in perfect wonder at the intercommunion of spirits here on earth.

He noticed my astonishment and said : "Rachel, you are not strong enough yet to listen to such vagaries."

"Go on! Harry," said I. "I am only a little nervous, and I should never be quiet again unless I could hear the end of your story."

"There was no more sleep for me that night. No

ghost was needed to set my nerves to thrilling so fearfully that sleep fled my eyelids. I rather wished he would come, or anything that could drive my terrible dream from memory. During the following afternoon Mr. Eveleigh came over to see me and told the reality of my dream. He said he left you delirious, and the doubt was whether you would ever recover. Poor little woman! Life has been over a rough path with me, has it not?"

"There have been some very rough places, my husband," I replied, "but the smooth ones have been more frequent than the rough, and love has sweetened every cup that has been pressed to my lips."

He bent over and kissed me. "Yes, Rachel, love can even brighten the gloom of prison walls."

"Your ghost, Harry, what of him?"

"Well, the next night he came ; but not until I had been refreshed with healthful slumber, and my senses were all intensely awake. My cell was in total darkness. Suddenly in the middle of the room a small white light blazed up—continuing until the whole apartment was thoroughly illuminated. I could have seen to read the finest print. Then there was a sound as of a rush of wind, that seemed to whirl something around, and there stood O'Brien—his face beaming kindly upon me, though his body was covered with blood. As I have stated, this apparition had appeared to me three nights before that time. I arose, and, standing upon my feet a few paces back : 'In the name of God !' I cried, 'speak and tell what you want. Can you not rest peacefully in your grave? Why do you come back to torment me?'

"Slowly the spectre raised his right hand and pointing towards heaven, said : 'We are commanded to forgive one another !'

" 'Yes, so the Bible tells us.'

" 'You will then forgive me ?'

" 'Yes, poor O'Brien, I do forgive you as I hope to be forgiven.' "

I clasped Harry's hand while he spoke and trembled so that I could not speak. "Be quiet," he said. "Almost as soon as it had spoken these words the spectre disappeared. It did not fade away. It did not fall—but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, like a flash of powder it went out, and my cell was again in darkness! I got up and groped my way over my room. I could find nothing but the chair upon which my clothes hung, the table upon which my Bible lay, and the pitcher from which I drank. I looked through the grating of my window. The night was almost of inky blackness. The sky was overhung with clouds, through which dimly peeped forth—here and there—a flickering star, serving to render the blackness blacker still, for their little light.

"I lay down and covered my head with the counterpane, when a voice sounded in my ears : 'Fear not.' I looked up and around and felt the fanning as of gentle wings, that soon soothed me to sleep.

"The jailor was rapping at my door the next morning before I awoke. I got up and hastily prepared to take my breakfast. He had a pot of strong coffee.

" 'You seem bright this morning, Watson,' he said.

" 'Yes.'

“ ‘ Did you sleep well ?’

“ ‘ Yes.’

‘ He walked around as if he wished me to ask him some question.

“ ‘ Did you sleep well ?’ I inquired.

“ ‘ So, so. My wife was disturbed.’

“ ‘ Ah ! By what ?’

“ ‘ Well, by a bloody ghost.’

“ ‘ A bloody ghost ?’

“ ‘ Yes. Not like any she ever saw before.

“ ‘ Indeed ! Did she speak the ghost ?’

“ ‘ Well, I guess she did, from what she told me.’

“ ‘ What did she say to the ghost ?’

“ ‘ In the name of God, what do you want ?’ she said.

“ ‘ Did the ghost make any reply to her ?’

“ ‘ He did not at the time, but seemed to fly away in a gust of wind, and then came a voice to her in a whisper : “ I am forgiven ! I am forgiven ! I shan’t come back any more ! I can now sleep in peace.” ’

“ ‘ Are you sure your wife told you this ?’ I cried.

“ ‘ Here she comes now ; she can speak for herself.’

“ The jailor’s wife came in and related the story just as her husband had told it. She looked at me curiously, but I carefully guarded the secret, and determined I would first reveal my vision to you.”

“ What do you think of it, Harry ?” I asked.

“ I hardly know what to say, Rachel. But if I ever saw O’Brien in the flesh, I saw him in the spirit.”

“ Have you been disturbed since then ?”

“ Never. I have slept as soundly as if I were at home in our ruined cottage. I may be a little pale,

but it is only the pallor of confinement. I am extremely comfortable for a man under indictment for—for ——”

“Don’t say for what, Harry.” I saw the muscles of his face quiver, and I knew what a trial it was to him to use any term that explained his misfortune, whether “*murder*,” or the apology conveyed in the word “*manslaughter*.” “But of this vision, Harry, tell me if you can assign any cause for it.”

“Rachel, if it had been manifest only to the sense of sight, I should say it resulted from an excited condition of the brain, wrought into feverish imaginings, but when I remember so perfectly what the spectre said, and when the story of the jailor’s wife so nearly corresponds, I am totally at a loss to account for it. Perhaps ‘magnetic sympathy’ may be a term to use in explanation, but men of science must explain the phenomenon, I cannot.”

I must confess my heart felt much lightened after this visit to Harry, although, as the time set for his trial approached, in spite of my confidence of the innocence of his intent, I shuddered to think of what influences might be brought to bear against him, what quibbles might be resorted to, to convict him of wilful crime.

The despoiler of our home, the incendiary of our cottage, walked the earth abroad in defiance of law; what right had I to look to justice? He read my countenance as he would a book, and, taking my hand, said to me: “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.”

The sun was declining over the western hills before I took leave of him. The children kept up a merry

prattle on the way, and spoke as confidently of the time when "papa should come home," as if there pended not over him the possibility that it might be long, if ever, before we should again greet him by the fire-side. My homeward journey was spent in prayer.

In one of my journeys to the prison, I was almost bereft of my reason, by the narrow escape from a horrible death experienced by my little Edna. The thoughts of my children were so occupied for their father, that they seemed to forget themselves, except as a part of him. In no other way can I account for the absence of mind which threw my little girl on the track of the railroad just at the depot. She did not seem to hear the whistle. Fortunately the engineer saw her in time to retard the motion of the train, when like a little dreamer, she emerged, unhurt, on the opposite side of the track, the cars being just upon her heels.

The conductor had leaped from the platform, and evidences of danger seizing upon the passengers, they poured out from the cars and soon surrounded the now frightened child. She could scarcely realize her situation. "In the name of God! Mrs. Watson, why do you not take better care of your children?" cried the conductor.

What could I say? In truth I had no answer for him; for I did not know where Edna was. "I would not have that little girl run such another risk for my whole train!" said the kind-hearted man.

By this time, the child experienced a revulsion of feeling, and was crying bitterly. The passengers petted and comforted her; told her that nothing was the

matter, but something might be next time, and to keep sharp eyes and ears not to be in the way.

"I didn't see! I didn't hear!" cried the child. "But you must see and you must hear," said the conductor, kindly, shaking her hand and leaping back on the platform.

I took her up in my arms and kissed away the bright tears that hung upon her cheeks. Oh! the incomprehensible tenderness of a mother's love! and yet at that moment, so overwhelmed was I in misery and misfortune, that I should almost have blessed the Providence which might have snatched one of my treasured children from a similar fate. It was very sinful, but a great, good and wise Father will be very merciful to such transgressions. He knows and pities our weaknesses, and if sometimes we faint, or rebel against the burdens of life, our punishment will be estimated by the feebleness of humanity.

This near approach to a casualty was a useful lesson to Edna and her little sisters. Since then they have kept sharp eyes and ears for cars, and are mindful not to saunter on railroad tracks.

CHAPTER XIV.

HARRY'S TRIAL AND ACQUITTAL.

At length the time for my husband's trial arrived. I found it impossible to keep away from the scene. Committing my children to the care of Mrs. Eveleigh, I accompanied Mr. Eveleigh to the court.

At first the judge refused me admittance, but after much persuasion and a promise from me that I would control my emotions—it mattered not how much they cried for the mastery—he consented that I should be allowed an obscure seat in the court-house.

The building was crowded. There were eager excited faces that everywhere met my gaze. I turned from them all with a sickened sensation, and drew a veil closely over my features, to avoid the rude stare which some bestowed on "Watson's wife."

I felt a shriek tearing my breast when the constable brought in my husband, but I suppressed it, and stifled even the sobs that I feared would choke me, so terribly did they struggle for utterance.

Harry was very pale, but his eye was steady and his step firm. I did not withdraw my gaze from him for a single moment. The case was formally opened, the indictment read, and the sheriff impanelled the jury. There was no change in Harry's countenance until he rose and claimed the privilege of objecting to a member of the jury. A hot blush then suffused his

cheeks, and I noticed his eyes flash with indignation. At this demonstration on his part, there grew up an excited argument which finally resulted in the refusal of the objectionable party, and the swearing in of another. The cause of Harry's objection was, his positive knowledge of the bribery of this man, and he determined that justice single-handed should be meted out to him, let the consequences be what they might.

Then came the qualification of the witnesses.

O'Brien's two sons and his daughter appeared and took the required oath. They were the principal witnesses on the side of the prosecution. There was a look of fierce exultation on their countenances when they placed the Bible to their lips and swore to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,"

The most prominent witness for the defence was John La Rue. His life had been threatened if he dared to make his appearance, but despite all warnings he was in place and ready to testify to all in his knowledge of the deed of blood. There were various others sworn in, but their evidence was considered only accessory to the main testimony in the case.

For more than two days the examination of witnesses continued. Various intangible points of law were brought up, intricate technicalities were brought to bear, pitiful quibbles were introduced by the prosecuting attorney—a young "limb of the law," who fancied he could build up a reputation quite equal to Rufus Choate, in his vindication of the majesty of justice, and my heart almost sank within me at times, when I watched the effect upon the feelings of the jury.

But my husband's counsel was astute and sagacious,

and in the cross-examination so perfectly entangled O'Brien's witnesses, that but for fear of injury to his case, he would have demanded that their testimony be set aside, so unreliable and full of discrepancies. During all this time Harry was calm—now and then suggesting a question to his attorney, and chiefly to expose Brown's complicity in the outrage upon his house.

The argument was long and tedious. It involved the question of our right to the property, and the validity or invalidity of the state-deed. We were denominated "squatters," "beavers," and "ground rats," and various opprobrious epithets were heaped upon us, to convince the jury that we were public nuisances. The summing up of the testimony called for elaborate speeches on each side, and when finished I trembled; for no one can calculate upon the effect of false arguments upon the human mind. Sophistry may be clad in such attractive cunning as to wear the semblance of truth.

The judge was a stern man, but one who had great humanity, and in his charge to the jury he bade them be careful; if any doubt of the guilt of the prisoner appeared to them, to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. With this injunction the jury retired, having my husband's life in their hands. It was a period of awful suspense to me. For more than twenty-four hours they were in consultation, and finally returned a verdict that Harry Watson killed O'Brien in defence of his life, his family, and his home! therefore, **NOT GUILTY!** At this, a loud cheer rang through the courtroom, despite the presence of his "honor," and Harry's hand was shaken by more than a score of friends in little more than a minute.

In the midst of the excitement I swooned, and when I regained my senses, I was being borne out by several gentlemen, who wept over me like children, and at the same time, laughed through their tears. Harry was literally carried out on the shoulders of his friends. There was not a dry eye to be seen, except those in his own head. He wore an expression of profound gratitude, but not of exultation; and hastening away we were soon on the route to Mr. Eveleigh's, where our little girls awaited us in trembling anxiety.

Poor little things, their hearts were filled with dread, notwithstanding their prayers and faith, and when they saw me bringing their father home, they ran to meet us, frantic with joy. Harry took them all in his arms, and the fortitude that had so long sustained him, then gave way. He clasped them to his bosom, while the deep emotions of his nature overflowed, and their brown locks were thickly besprinkled with his tears.

Oh! it was a scene over which the angels must have wept in sympathy. The tension of his nerves relaxed, he was almost as much a child as little Maude who was borne in his arms to the house.

After a silent pressure of the hand, and congratulation expressed only in the beaming of their eyes, Mr. and Mrs. Eveleigh did not intrude upon the joyful reunion of our little family.

We retired to our room, and kneeling in deep humility before God, offered up to him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, for his great mercy and his divine deliverance.

We felt as if a mighty load had been rolled from our hearts, and purified and strengthened in the furnace of

affliction, we buckled fresh sandals upon our feet, and calmly contemplated the remainder of life's journey. Satisfied that we were not able to judge of the designs of Providence by "feeble sense," we laid our burdens upon him, and trusting to his grace to guide us, went on as the children of Israel behind the pillar of fire, in the night-time.

CHAPTER XV.

ADrift—ANCHOR IN GEORGETOWN.

FREE once more, Harry was forced to bethink himself of how and where to settle. It was a question of momentous importance. We could not trespass longer upon the generosity of Mr. Eveleigh. The morning after his release, as if almost afraid to make such a proposition to me, he whispered, "Rachel, my heart yearns very lovingly over that little wilderness home of ours."

"What would you propose, Harry?"

"That we go back and see in what condition it is."

"You will find only a blackened heap of ruins."

"But the corn in our garden must be ripe by this time, and the peaches upon the trees we planted when first we planted there a happy family; and the pears on the tree near the chimney, and the wild roses bloom, even though you are not there, my wife, to enjoy their fragrance."

"And you would like once to look upon the spot upon which we burrowed like ground-rats?"

"Yes, Rachel."

"Then we will go."

"You are mad!" exclaimed Mr. Eveleigh, when we made known to him our intention.

"No, my friend," said Harry, "we are only going to behold the flowers abloom and the fruit ripened over the grave of buried hopes."

"It is all very romantic, but rather nonsensical to

talk of such a thing," said Mr. Eveleigh, in the most practical manner.

"Well," said Harry, "we have been driven into romance in spite of ourselves, and should like to carry it out a little farther."

"Suppose you are both brought back with a load of buckshot in your bodies?"

"We have no fear of that."

"There is no telling the depth of Brown's malice and jealousy."

"I do not fear him, though his revenge may be more deadly than that of Cain."

"Then if you will go, the risks must be upon your own head. I feel that I have enacted the watchman, and have nothing more to say."

Like a pair of pilgrims we journeyed back through the woods to the remains of our early retreat. When we arrived in sight I lifted up my voice and wept. There was not even the fence around our garden left standing, and the tall rank weeds raised their heads above the ripening corn, and hid from sight the wild roses that clambered over the little rustic bower. Across the way a few logs alone gave evidence of the former dwelling-place of our good neighbor, John La Rue, and desolation sat, a very queen of terrors, over the little settlement in the wilderness.

"Do you wish to return here and rebuild, Harry?" I asked, almost breathlessly awaiting a reply.

"Does my wife wish to come back?" He looked at me inquiringly.

"No, Harry. I am satisfied. I would not come back to nurse the memory of so many troubles."

"It is well," he answered, "but whither shall we wander?"

"Let Providence decide."

Hand in hand we visited the spring, the old stables, and the maples, and then we took a last farewell of the wilderness home. We were a sad pair as we wandered back to the hospitable shelter of our friend. A sad, sad pair! What we were to do, where to go, we knew not. Few words were spoken on the way, but unuttered prayer floated up on the evening breeze and found lodgment in the ear of the All-Father.

When we got back to Mr. Eveleigh's, we found a letter from my brother-in-law in Georgetown, desiring us to come and make a home with him. To accept this invitation was a sad trial to Harry's independence, but no other alternative presenting itself, he accepted it as a provision of the Almighty. My brother's home was in the village of Georgetown, and there we made our way with the little all that remained to us.

Since then ten years have passed. They have not been uneventful years, but compared with the experiences of those of my story, they seem tame and unexciting.

Life there opened before us strikingly different phases. The education of our daughters absorbed the most of our thoughts, while Harry eked out a support in the best manner he could. Often we were placed in the most trying straits, but in every extremity we were granted strength in proportion. My brother-in-law was kind to a fault, but the sense of a measure of dependence upon him often galled my pride most bitterly.

As my daughters grew up, this they too felt, and determined as soon as possible, to relieve him of the additional burden to his responsibilities presented in them.

It has not been quite a year since a precious treasure was demanded of me, which I was forced to yield. The hand of my eldest daughter Melissa was asked in marriage.

At first, as to every mother, it seemed like a ruthless invasion of our most sacred rights, and I turned from it with a feeling of anguish that almost overpowered me. In review I ran over her young life, all that she had been to me in my brighter and my darker hours, and my mother's heart gathered itself around her and refused to give her up. I turned to my husband for relief.

"You were young once yourself, Rachel," he said, "and one asked *you* to make him happy. Have you any right to be selfish now, and refuse to another what I so eagerly sought at your father's hands?"

"But Harry—"

"But what?"

"It did not seem so hard then."

"Because you stood in a different relation?"

"Then you shall resolve my doubt."

"Rachel, the human heart demands love, as the flowers the dew; as the parched earth, the cool and refreshing rain; as the day the light; as the night the stars. Blight not the young heart of our child by withholding from it the nourishment needful, but rather bless her with your approval." At that Melissa and — were called in from an adjoining room. Harry

took her little hand and laid it in his. "In darkness and in sorrow she has been ours, to cheer, to comfort and sustain; now to thee we yield her, to perform like offices—if, in the providence of God, dark days should ever come to you, and if not, to double your joys; to lift from your shoulders even the shadow of care; to be to you a faithful companion and a help-meet."

There were tears of thankfulness in a pair of eyes that were shining upon us; thankfulness that could find no expression but in the silent grasp of the hand, and Melissa, our first-born, went forth, betrothed.

Last Christmas she was called for. We had a quiet wedding, and very lonely seemed the home-circle after she had been called away. We missed her as we miss the sunshine when a light cloud crosses the sun's disk, and a shadow steals over the lonely chamber. The flowers of love have clustered thickly upon her pathway, and in her happiness she is blending useful domestic virtues. She is a crown of joy to her husband, and in him she finds a well-spring of comfort. With her prospective lot in life, I can but be satisfied.

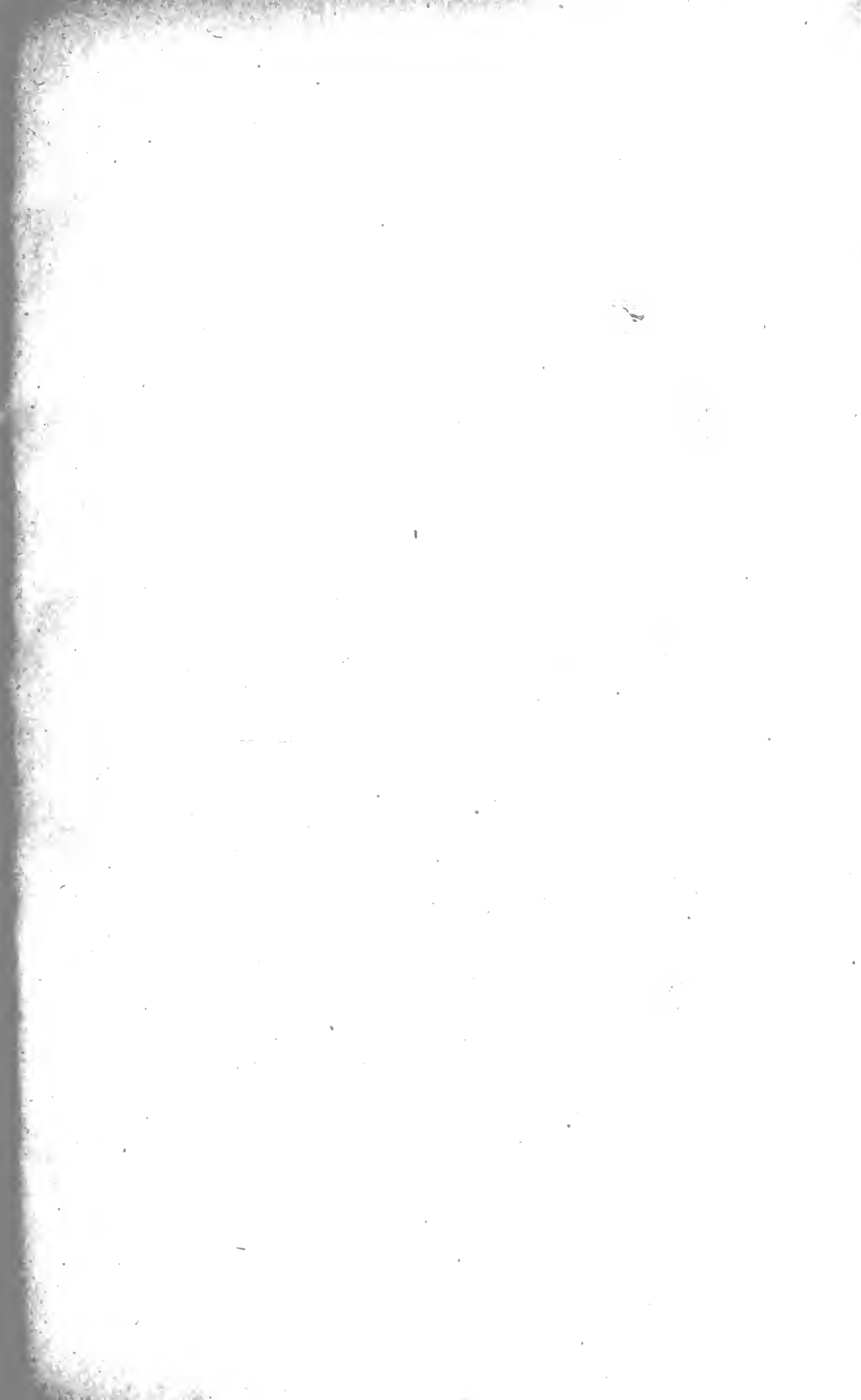
My chief cares now centre around my two remaining daughters. Theirs is a portion of poverty. They endeavor to exercise the most beautiful contentment, for honest poverty enriches its possessor, far more than ill-gotten wealth. Their uncle is the very soul of kindness, but longer dependence upon him begins to look like a dire imposition; and they feel it more deeply every day. Edna and Maude are ambitious to earn a livelihood. The province for female endeavor seems constricted and ungenerous, and beset with snares and temptations on every side.

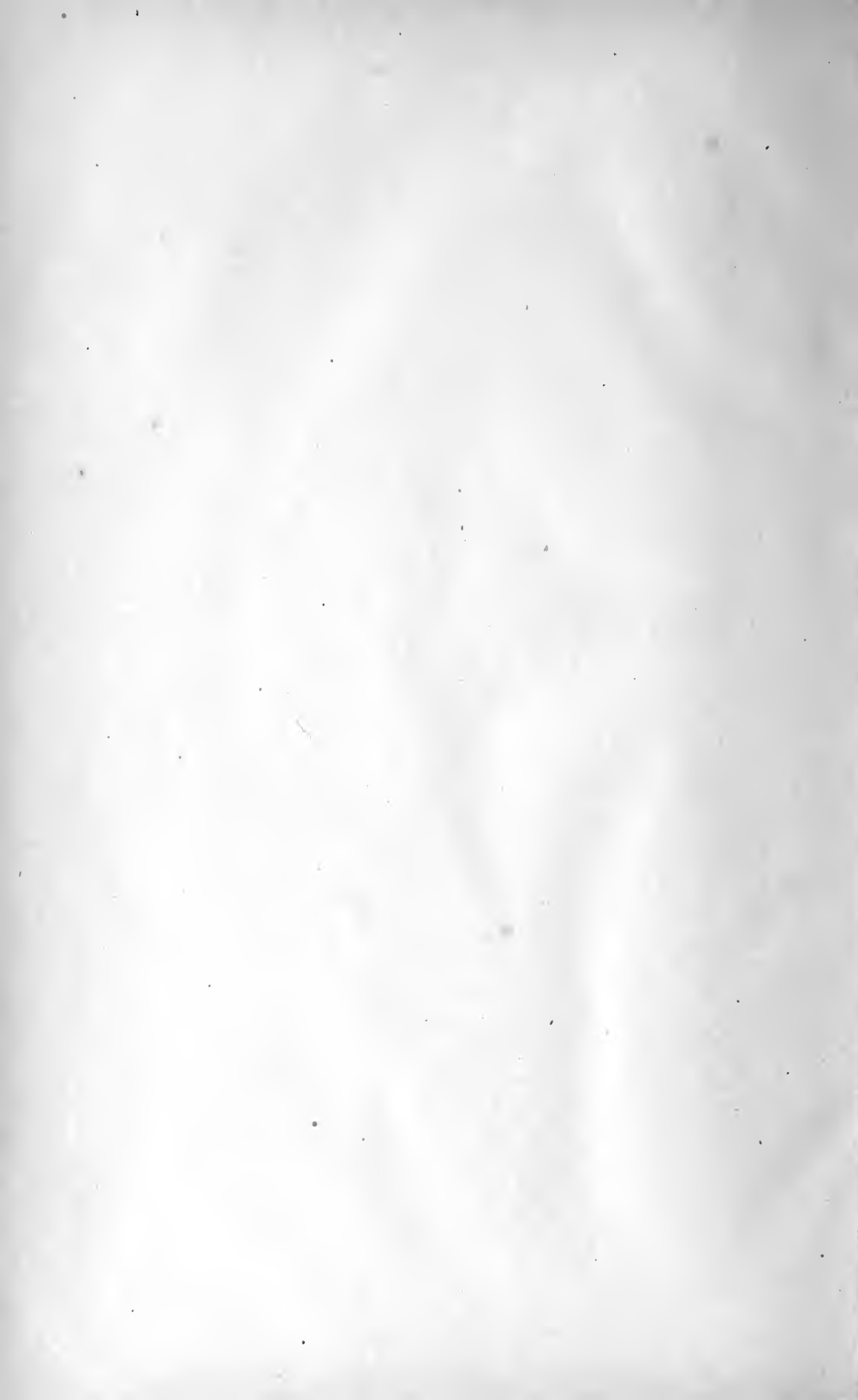
I have nothing to leave my children but this record of our family history. This I have written and give to my daughters, Edna and Maude, as a precious legacy.

If there are those who like the real and the actual better than the imaginative, and who may prefer the *truth* "stranger than fiction," to the fiction which mutilates and demoralizes the finer sensibilities of the human heart, they will not reject my narrative.

Before a generous and appreciative public I dare to lay it ; simply asking sympathy for those who may buffet the winds and waves of adversity, and perhaps a tear for the unfortunate. It is a correct history of my family life, with which my daughters will travel and sell.

THE END.

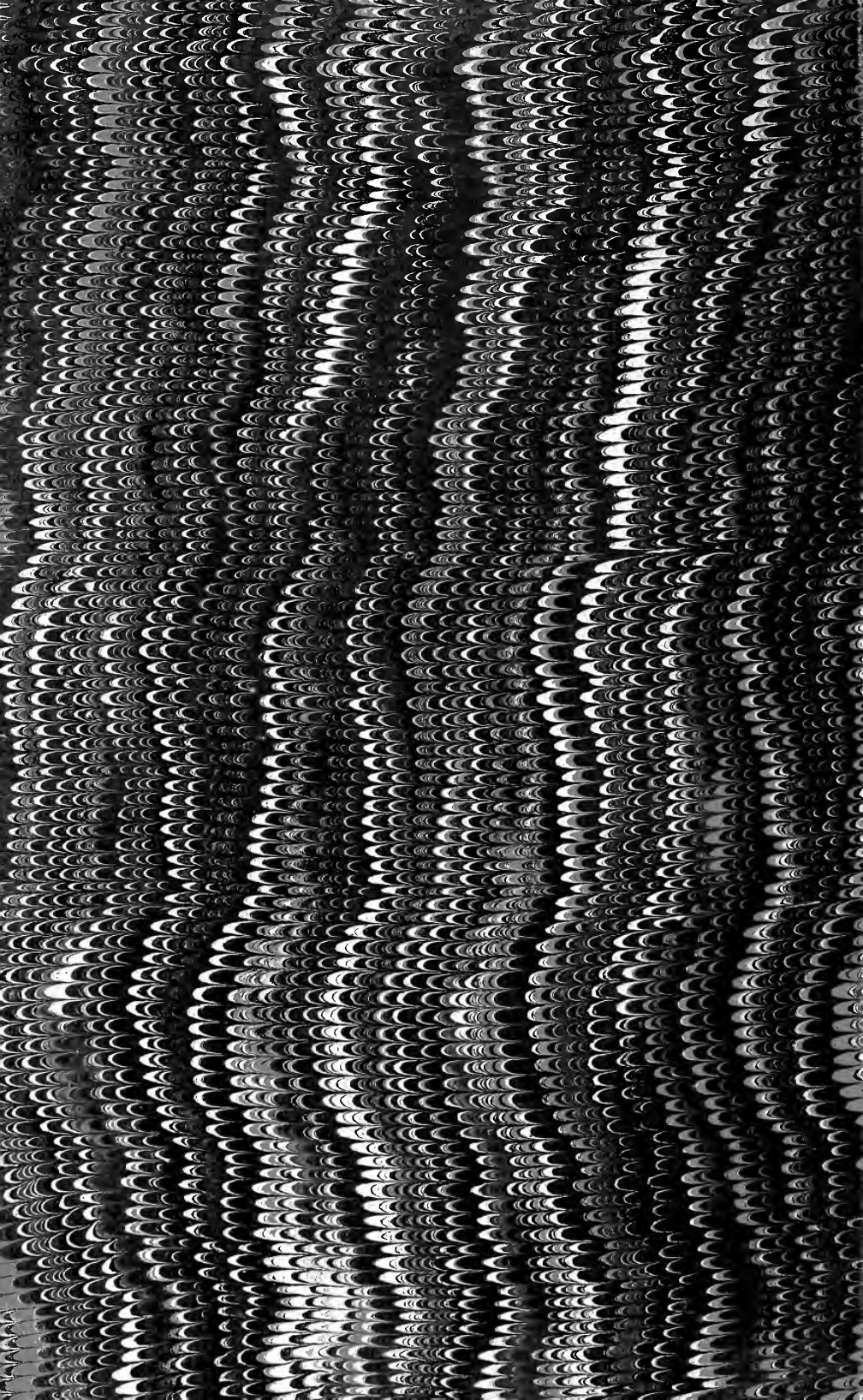


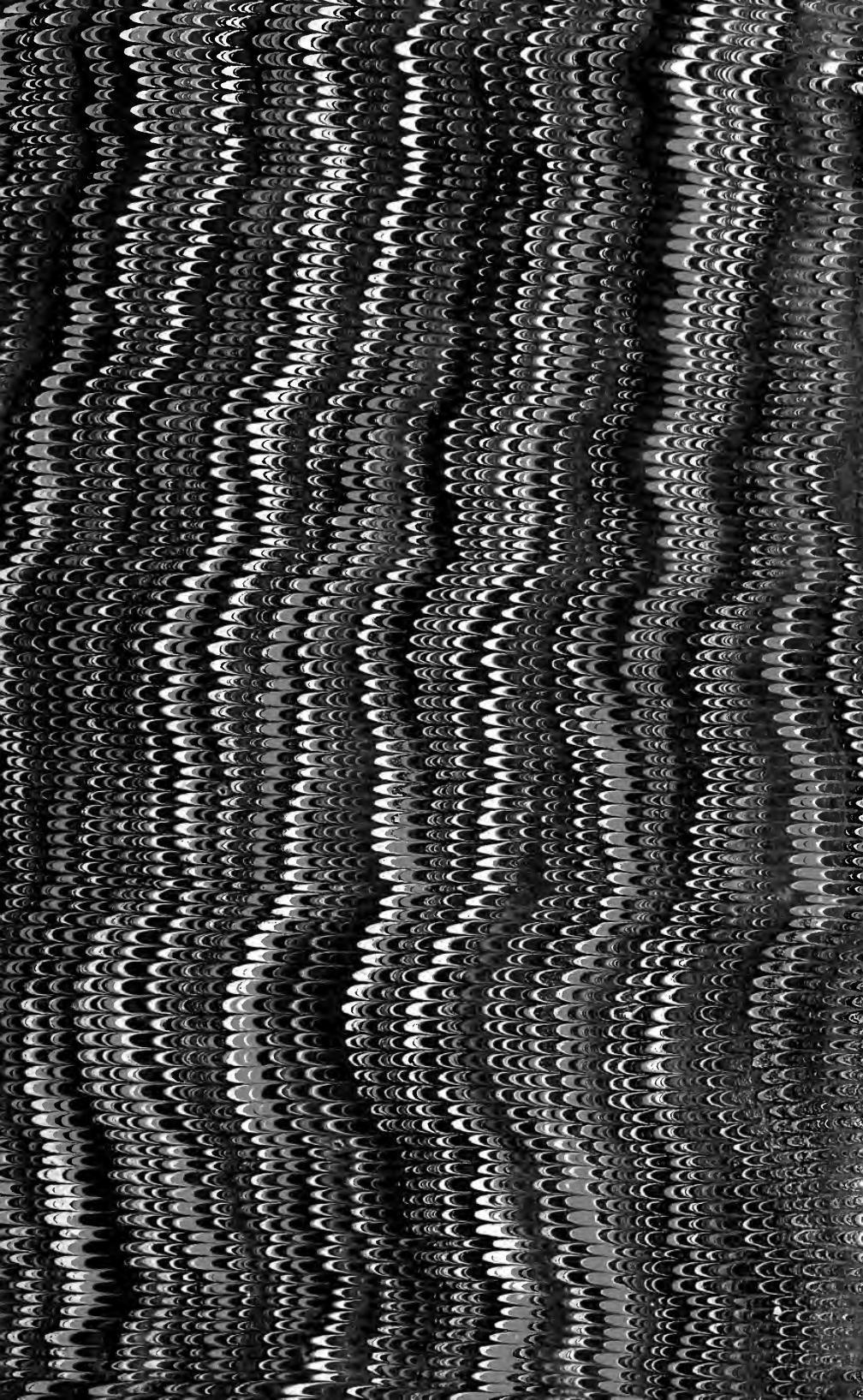












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